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FEARS AND CARES.

FEARS AND CARES.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By E. D. CARR,

AUTHOR OF

THE ADVERTISEMENT, OR TWENTY YEARS AGO, &c.

"The superior Being can defeat all his designs, and disappoint all his hopes."

.. ..

What lady is that?
The heir of Alanson, Rosaline her name.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1821.

FEARS AND CARES.

CHAPTER I.

"I CRAVE pardon, sir Hugh. God forgive me for being so wicked as to disturb your honour," said a footman, who had grown grey in the service of sir Hugh Singleton's family, as he cautiously opened the door of his master's apartment, when he was devoutly offering up his orisons before he retired for the night—"God forgive me, as I said before, but *little master* is come!"

"Who?" questioned sir Hugh, staring with astonishment as he rose from his recumbent posture.

"*Who* did you say was come?"

"Why *little master*, your honour, that we have all been so long looking for," replied the old man exultingly, rubbing his hands as he spoke—"he has been come above this hour!"

"Then why not let me know before, if any person had arrived that wanted to see me?"

"Lord love you, sir," exclaimed the domestic, smirkingly, "Robert is but this moment arrived, with his horse all in a foam, to bring us the intelligence."

"Robert! what Robert? of whom are you speaking?" questioned the baronet, with increasing surprise.

"Mr. Singleton's Robert, your honour, and a prodigious fine baby he says it is!"

A light now began to dawn upon the rather-bewildered faculties of sir Hugh, who gathered from the disjointed sentences uttered by the servant, that there had been an increase to his family in the birth of a nephew; and although, from his naturally

sedate

sedate and quiescent, which some went so far as to term apathetic, turn of mind, which prevented him from taking an interest in common things and common events, in this instance he experienced a new and peculiar emotion agitate his breast—an emotion which, quickening the hitherto languid circulation of his blood, now sent it in circling eddies to his heart —that heart whose pulses had never been ruffled by the sweet throbs of sympathetic affection, nor called into action by parental ones—for, reader, sir Hugh Singleton bore the appellation of *bachelor!*

In a borough town situate in the west of England, about the middle of the last century, dwelt Owen Singleton, descended from one of that quiet and unobtrusive sect denominated Quakers. Reared in the habits, as well as in the trade, by which his forefathers had gained an honest and profitable livelihood, Owen thought of but little else, besides now and then attending his conventicle, and superintending his

father's shop, till one eventful day that it was generally made known, "some of the people called Quakers, on a religious visit to their town, intended having a meeting for worship that evening; and that the company of as many of the inhabitants as might be inclined to attend would be acceptable."

Intelligence like this could not fail to operate even upon the phlegmatic disposition of the hitherto immovable Owen; and he waited rather impatiently for the approaching hour which would afford him an additional fund of instructive knowledge, to be treasured up, from the wise precepts with which he was going to be edified. But a circumstance awaited him which he did not expect, nor was prepared to foresee—a circumstance which in the event would decide the welfare or misery of his future existence.

The speakers for this evening consisted of two female friends, who were accompanied by one much younger than themselves,

selves, and who, under her plain dove-coloured bonnet and prim cap, concealed a pair of sparkling eyes, calculated to do a world of mischief by their vivid glances, and which only waited the kindling spark to light up the fire which glowed within. Owen Singleton was not proof against these dazzling orbs; he felt the full force of their lustre, and instead of learning how to shut his mind against worldly temptation, and to resist all gross and carnal passions, he sunk, subdued by the powerful attractions of the fair Rebecca, and returned to that home where hitherto he had experienced nought but peace and comfort, but whence he now discovered that peace was fled, and comfort only to be found in the society of the fascinating damsel that had thus bewildered him.

Owen Singleton, like another Cymon, when struck by the charms of his Iphigenia, became at once an ardent and resistless lover; and the gentle Rebecca, subdued alike in her turn, soon consented, by unit-

ing their destinies, to render her lover happy as his utmost imagination could render him.

The beautiful Rebecca had not been long a bride, ere that degree of spirit in her constitution which had hitherto lain dormant, for want of opportunity to call it forth, began to shew itself; several little innovations already began to creep into their long-established customs; and Owen gazed in astonishment, when he first beheld the stray ringlet peeping from beneath the prim lawn cap of his Rebecca, and observed the familiar and hitherto accustomed epithets of *thee* and *thou* exploded from her vocabulary; nay, he even went so far as to detect her one day with a volume of Shakespeare in her hand, which she had the confidence to confess she had been reading, and, what was still more, to acknowledge she had a strong predilection for his beauties.

The fond husband remonstrated upon these *outré* circumstances, but only to meet

meet a lively retort upon his broad brim, which she playfully insisted should be retrenched; he argued, but was confuted; he refused, but was obliged to comply; for "who can withstand the witchery of woman's wiles?"

Rebecca at length gained so far upon her husband, that she led him by degrees to abandon that form of Christian worship in which they had both been brought up, but which she had never approved; whether from a perfect conviction that any other would conduct her by a safer and more commodious path to heaven, I am not casuist enough to determine; but this I can say, that she thought her Owen looked ten times handsomer when divested of his odious, old-fashioned, prim apparel, such as had been worn by his great-grandfather, and arrayed in a modern suit; while, as to herself, if her mirror did not deceive her, she had lost nothing in appearance by the exchange of her wardrobe.

The Singletons, divested of their primi-

tive habits, cast off also at the same time much of that original simplicity of manner which particularly distinguishes the sect of which they had been members. Owen evinced more spirit in his general conversation and transactions with men of business, entered deeply into various speculations in trade, now and then opened his doors by way of entertaining his friends, and in short, began, to the delight of his wife, "to live like other folks."

The humble dwelling in which this contented being had toiled from his infancy, and which had hitherto been the boundary of his ambition, was now discovered to be insufficient for the accommodation he required; the little parlour behind the counting-house was of too narrow dimensions to be occupied by the increasing number of his friends; it was therefore proposed by the husband, and warmly seconded by the wife, that a more modern mansion should arise, phœnix-like, from the ashes of the old one—a mansion which,

by

by its size and splendour, should do honour to their rising fortunes.

Behold then Mr. Singleton — friend Owen no longer—in full possession of his new and elegant residence, happy as present success and smiling future prospects could render him: nor had Providence been niggardly to him in other respects; his darling Rebecca had presented him with a cherished progeny, consisting of two sons and a daughter, possessing all their mother's beauty, at least so thought the enraptured father, as he gazed on them with eyes beaming paternal affection and delight.

To rear these tender plants, which Heaven, in his estimation, had so kindly sent him, occupied a great portion of the time which Mr. Singleton did not devote to business; and although he had in a large degree stepped out of the beaten track, so long trodden by his forefathers, yet he still kept a watchful eye upon his concerns; and not to lose sight of the main chance,

formed the first sentence of his creed. To accumulate the goods of fortune, and not to indulge in unnecessary and frivolous expences, was one of the first precepts which, independent of religion, he instilled into the youthful minds of his children; and he would frequently insinuate behind the curtain, that "a penny saved was a penny got;" and that "the true value of a thing was as much money as it would bring;" with many other trite and commonplace observations, which he thought might facilitate his doctrine, and render it familiar to their infantine capacities.

The next rule he prescribed was to accustom them to give to every transaction, however trifling, that came under their observation, a full, due, and candid investigation; thereby endeavouring to deduct the right from the wrong, not according to the superficial mode, generally adopted, of believing a thing is right, because it appears so; but to sift every concern to the bottom, and by so doing, clearly ascertain

certain the merits or demerits, the proper or improper, of every circumstance. By these means the young people, as they advanced in years, became exceedingly quick-sighted in all worldly affairs, and by adopting this prescribed caution, they conducted themselves in a style superior to most people of their age, and were sure to steer clear of all impositions or over-reachings in their dealings with others. Thus circumspect and guarded in their conduct, advancing, as it were, step by step, into the vale of life, could it be a matter of surprise, that the Singletons should become the wonder of their less opulent or less successful neighbours?

A series of uninterrupted happiness and gay prosperity followed this fortunate couple for many years after the birth of their children; and no one had fewer of the "miseries of human life" to complain of than Owen Singleton, when the unruffled calm was broken, by what many people in his situation would have termed a

fortunate circumstance, a *lucky hit*, &c. but which he only regarded as an unpropitious event, likely to prove subversive of that long-established peace which had hitherto reigned in his family.

The incident alluded to in the present instance, was the being selected by his fellow-burghers as the most opulent amongst them, and therefore bearing the stamp of superior merit in their eyes, as a proper instrument for conveying an address, upon a particular occasion, to the throne. Mr. Singleton at first felt disposed to refuse an honour thus officiously forced upon him; but the over-persuasions of his gentle Rebecca, whose aspiring genius pointed to a reward proportionate to the service he was destined to undertake, added to the solicitations of his neighbours, prevailed; and the half-timid, half-repenting Owen, after receiving his credentials, at length set out for town, where sufficient interest had been procured to pave his way to the presence of royalty.

Every

Every one knows that whoever is admitted to the English court, upon such an errand, seldom returns without receiving a permanent and substantial mark of the royal favour. Mr. Singleton, in this instance, proved no exception; for, after bending the knee in homage to a monarch whose mild and beneficent sway endeared him to all well-disposed hearts, and gained him the affections of his people, he rose up with a weight of honour on his shoulders, and retired from the presence no longer *Mr.* but as *Sir Owen* Singleton.

Although hitherto but little apt to have his vanity tickled by the favours which dame Fortune delighted to shower upon him, the heart of the newly-created knight beat with rather a quicker pulsation than it was wont, upon his return to the loved spot which contained his darling Rebecca; and he could not help anticipating the satisfaction which he knew she would receive, when he should salute her ears by accosting

accosting her with her new title. Sir Owen was in the right; the sparkling eyes and mantling cheeks of the gratified Rebecca, as she hung delighted on her husband's neck, whilst he related the enchanting tale, confirmed him in his conjectures; and he was convinced, that to be addressed as *my lady Singleton*, would compensate for many evils in life, had she been doomed to endure them.

Compliments and congratulations now poured in upon the new-aggrandized pair from all quarters; and however they might have been inclined to have borne their honours meekly, they were not permitted; for sir Owen and my lady Singleton could, at this period, be scarcely said to act from any impulse of their own, so eager were the neighbouring gentry to initiate them into the established rules and ceremonies of fashionable life. In consequence of this, but few days passed without some tempting engagement to draw them from their home; and those months, days, and hours, which

which the gentle Rebecca was accustomed to bestow upon her domestic duties, were now spent by *lady Singleton* in paying and receiving morning visits, dining with those she termed friends, or attending the usual public places.

Sir Owen, as well as his rib, had also been induced, under the new system of things, to take his share of these nouvelle amusements; but finding, according to the old adage, that they neither brought grist to the mill, nor conduced in any way towards his comfort, he in a great measure declined them, and returned again to the retirement of his beloved counting-house, where, by following the natural bias of his disposition, and giving free scope to his calculating genius, he could alone enjoy permanent happiness.

"My dear sir *O.*" for the appellation of Owen had long been exploded from the vocabulary of the fashionable lady Singleton as obsolete, and horridly vulgar—"my dear sir O. what can induce you to

to keep those poor boys pinned down to their desks thus from morning to night? I declare, it is my opinion that they will soon become as ridiculous as yourself, and entertain as great a dislike to mixing in society."

"As to your question, my dear," replied the still-indefatigable sir Owen, "I answer it thus,—because I flatter myself they find as much satisfaction in the employment as I do; and as to company, which you are led to believe such an essential good, let me add, it is only a snare to entrap the unwary, by leading them into temptations, which, by remaining contentedly at home, they would be sure to avoid."

Thus the sons, reared in the retired habits of their father, which habits increasing as they grew in years, they insensibly felt as great a dislike to mingling in the society that surrounded their mother as he did; and although nature had been sufficiently bountiful to them both, in regard to personal

sonal appearance, yet no spark of vanity had ever lighted up in them a desire to display them; and, what was rather singular, in spite of the many inviting regards and little feminine manœuvres to attract their attention, from the neighbouring fair ones, Hugh and Josiah Singleton, at the ages of thirty and thirty-five, remained alike unmarried.

CHAPTER II.

FORTUNE, who, like a fantastical coquette, alternately smiles or frowns upon her votaries, seemed for once to form an exception in favour of sir Owen Singleton; for though he had invariably enjoyed her favours for the last thirty years of his life, yet she still continued to regard him with a smiling aspect.

It happened one evening, after a day agreeably

agreeably spent in summing up the profits arising from the last year's speculations, and finding a balance of some thousands in his favour, that sir Owen Singleton quitted his desk in high good-humour, and prepared, with all that self-complacency which a man may be supposed to feel when he has carried a favourite point, to take his tea with the family party. The shutters of the sitting-parlour were already closed, the candles burned bright, and a blazing fire within bade defiance to the storm which raged without, for it "beat dark December," when a violent rapping at the street-door gave notice of an interruption to the tempting repast.

"See who is at the door, Richard," said lady Singleton to a servant who was bringing in the smoking tea-urn; "it is rather an unseemly hour for a call, and I expect no company to-night," continued she, musing, while Richard obeyed the command, and in a few minutes returned, saying

saying that a person had arrived who wished to speak with his master.

"What sort of a person is it?" inquired sir Owen.

"The man is a good deal muffled up, sir," answered the servant, "and from his splashed boots and dirty coat, I should guess he had come a long journey."

"Desire him to walk in."

The servant immediately vanished, but as quickly returned from delivering his message, stating that the stranger had said his business lay immediately with sir Owen; to him he begged to be introduced, and in private.

The knight, for a few seconds, appeared to hesitate as to the propriety of complying with such a demand; but when he reflected that he was in the bosom of his family, he felt convinced that he had nothing to fear, however singular such a request from a perfect stranger, so late in the day, might appear; desiring the footman therefore to follow

follow him with lights, he immediately led the way to the counting-room.

In vain did lady Singleton await the return of her spouse, in order to take his tea; the boiling urn by degrees became cold, and her patience nearly exhausted; still he came not. Dismayed at length by his protracted absence, she could no longer resist the keen desire she felt to ascertain if all was well, by sending the servant to inquire if his master chose any tea? A negative from sir Owen followed her inquiry, with a desire that her ladyship would not wait, as he should decline taking any that evening. Satisfied by this message that no measures had been taken to surprise him into any thing unpleasant, or derogatory to his welfare, she gave orders for the unsullied equipage to be removed, and betook herself to wonders and conjectures upon this extraordinary occurrence for another hour or two.

During the above-mentioned period, sir Owen Singleton had been occupied by the presence

presence of one who was a perfect stranger, and whose errand was no less extraordinary than his appearance. This was to demand his consent to a proposal of so singular a nature, that when he began to explain himself, the good knight was led to believe he was insane; nor could he give him credit for the possession of a sound intellect, even when he had got to the extent of his proposition. The person in question, as far as sir Owen could guess, seemed to have borne from twenty-five to thirty summers, on a brow whose pensive cast confessed, that "Melancholy had marked him for her own." He was in possession of a handsome exterior, while a peculiar mode of expression, and pathos in his voice, excited at once both interest and compassion, which induced sir Owen, who, although he loved to mind the main chance, was not perhaps absolutely made up of positive calculations of profits and loss, to lend an ear to his petition.

The stranger began to open his business by

by stating, that he had an immediate occasion for a very considerable sum of money; for which sum he had applied, in preference, to sir Owen Singleton, both on account of his reputation as a man of strict honour and probity, as well as a rich one; and he might also have added, from the knight's well-known character for indulging in speculations of this sort, in which he had hitherto been too successful, to leave a doubt in the mind of the applicant, as to his refusing compliance in the present instance. Continuing therefore to explain, he represented himself as the present possessor of a very valuable estate, situated in one of the most romantic and beautiful spots of South Wales, which had descended to him in a right line from his progenitors; this domain he went on to say, he meant to place in the hands of sir Owen Singleton, under certain restrictions, which would be found worthy of his consideration.

A proposal of this kind soon opened the ears

ears of the good man, and disposed him to yield the speaker his undivided attention, who thus went on—" An immediate and pressing occasion calls for my presence in a foreign land; peculiar circumstances may occur to detain me a resident there for the remainder of my life, or I may again return in a twelvemonth's short space, so uncertain is the termination of the event which calls me hence. Should my absence not exceed the latter-mentioned period, I feel unwilling to dispossess myself entirely of my paternal property, by effecting a sale of it; at the same time, my necessities require a larger sum than what is generally advanced upon a mortgage. I will therefore make you the following proposal:—If I should return within a given time, which I will mention, the money which you advance, with a proper compliment for the use of it, shall be secured to you; if not, you may then conclude that I am absent for life, or have ceased to be an inhabitant of this

this world. In either case you shall be allowed to take possession of my exclusive property, and by retaining it as your own, procure from thence a right of bequest to your descendants, unless within another given time it is redemanded by a lawful claimant."

Extravagant as this project appeared to be, and which sir Owen could not help thinking the effusion of a disordered brain, still he deemed it worthy of his serious consideration; when, after hearkening to the whispers of caution, who counselled him not to proceed without making all due inquiries, and to be certain that he was treading on firm ground, before he entered the labyrinths of speculation, he saw no reason why, if the man was thus bent upon making a loan of his property, he should not reap the benefit of it as well as another.—"Besides," he argued, "it will be doing the poor man a service at the same time, at least he has taken pains to make me believe so, and that ought to have

have some weight with me;" when, after arranging several preliminaries necessary to the negociation, and fixing when, by making an excursion into Wales, he might investigate the property, so as to ascertain its intrinsic value, sir Owen promised, provided it answered his expectations, to comply with the demand in question; the stranger then took his leave, apparently well satisfied with the arrangements between them.

Light were the slumbers which pressed the eyelids of sir Owen Singleton that night. Hills, dales, woods, and valleys, swam before his sleeping fancy in their brightest prospects, all courting his acceptance, and hailing him as their future master; and when he awoke in the morning, he felt doubly animated by the bright visions of increasing prosperity which floated around him.

Lady Singleton, who had her longings, in common with many other females, to be informed of their husbands' secrets,

was now fully acquainted with the transactions that were likely to take place, which the turmoil of ideas that had crowded the head of sir Owen the evening before, had prevented him from explaining; and now that he had digested the proposed plan, and slept upon it, he did not hesitate to make her ladyship a participator in the hopes arising from so tempting an enterprise; and she set about the preparation with alacrity that was to expedite his journey into Monmouthshire.

A visit of a few days sufficed to convince the knight that the tale he had been told respecting the value of the property which he might one day claim as his own, was not an exaggerated one. In its present state, it far surpassed his expectation, and he believed it still capable of great improvement in future; no hesitation was therefore experienced towards fulfilling the engagement which had been entered into between himself and the owner; and in this instance we must be allowed to remark,

mark, that sir Owen acted with decisive liberality, and that he never received a single twinge from lady Conscience for taking an undue advantage of one whom he could not help thinking in his heart was but one remove from a maniac.

Nothing now remained for Mr. Evans, the name by which the gentleman who has just made his appearance in these memoirs was distinguished, previous to his quitting his paternal abode, perhaps for ever, but to give directions to his steward to regard sir Owen Singleton in future as his representative, to treat him in every respect as he would himself, and to consider him as his master, until he should receive orders from him to announce the contrary. These preliminaries settled, he gave orders for his travelling equipage to be in readiness, when, with a moistened eye and quivering lip, he prepared to turn his back on a home dear to his heart, but which, through fortuitous circumstances, was forsaken for a residence in a foreign

country, amidst foreign customs and foreign friends.

During the period which was destined to elapse before the contract could be positively fulfilled, which, in all probability, would hail sir Owen Singleton master of Myfod Vale, the name of the estate in question, the family continued to pursue their regular routine of domestic life; for each was much too wary to speak openly of an event which might never happen, and much less likely to alter their mode of living in consequence: thus the same monotony prevailed amongst them, except being broken in one instance—this was the marriage of Miss Singleton.

Reared in all the habits of domestic economy, which had hitherto so strongly distinguished her family, she had scarcely ever been seen beyond the pale of her mother's visiting circle; and although generally reckoned very handsome, as well as likely to possess more solid attractions, no one in the vicinity of their neighbourhood

hood ever ventured to solicit an alliance with the daughter of the *rich* sir Owen Singleton.

Thus the blooming Marian, notwithstanding these advantages, might have been left to "wither on the virgin thorn," had not that destiny, which is said to govern wedlock, conducted her to a fashionable watering-place, on a visit to an old school-fellow, with whom she had been permitted to keep up a kind of intimacy. Here she chanced to be seen and admired by sir Howel Ap-Howell, a young Welsh baronet, who, although he might have been able to have traced his descent from the great Lewellyn, or even from Caractacus himself, had little else save his noble Welsh blood to boast of; for, although the title had descended pure and undefiled from the mixture of any plebeian puddle with the translucent stream that so richly flowed in his veins, still the more substantial requisites that ought to have accompanied this distinction, had dwindled from

generation to generation, till the present possessor had but very little left.

This was at first a very serious objection to his union with Miss Singleton. The knight was of opinion, that in the scale of wedlock the balance should equally preponderate; and as he might one day, though he could not exactly determine when, be brought to give his daughter a good round sum, so, according to the right and proper of the thing, she was entitled to marry a man upon an equality with herself in that respect; but when his newborn family-pride whispered him to remember the title which would be thrown in, in lieu of a more solid commodity, the balance seemed tolerably even. Besides, sir Owen had no objection to a little additional lustre reflected upon him by a planet of superior magnitude, in whose orbit he was content to move; and banishing his former scruples, he soon consented to the match, when Miss Singleton quitted her former distinction, to embrace the more

more sonorous one of lady Ap-Howel, to the delight of both her parents; and retiring with her husband to his native mountains, the happy bride (for where is there a bride that feels otherwise than happy?) left her family to comment upon the event, and to congratulate each other upon what they all agreed another of Fortune's lucky hits.

Lady Singleton, on her part, expressed the highest satisfaction in the connexion which her daughter had formed. Here she could perceive their budding family honours beginning to bloom; and if delighted at possessing what may be termed the shadow of title herself, can it be wondered at that she rapturously hailed the appearance of the substance in her daughter, when to be able to talk of my *lady Ap-Howel* amongst her visiting acquaintance formed the enjoyment of her life, and acme of her ambition?

CHAPTER III.

As the youthful heir may be supposed to pant for the time when, liberated from the trammels which have hitherto confined him, he may enjoy the full liberty of possession, and revel uncontrolled in the patrimony assigned him, so eagerly did sir Owen Singleton, as the time drew nigh, which, by the protracted absence of Mr. Evans, was to vest in him all the properties of his estate, or by his reappearance crush at once his hopes and his suspense.

In this state of anxiety, as the weeks and days moved tardily along, the monthly calendar was frequently referred to in his calculations of time; and even the dial-plate which decorated the chimneypiece in his office was sometimes suspected of standing still; so eager was the good man to

to leap the gulph that intervened betwixt him and happiness.

That tide which regularly rolls on to the ocean of eternity, and which no man can either hasten or retard, but in his own imagination, brought at length the period so long and so earnestly desired by sir Owen, and his no-less-impatient family; and to crown the summit of their expectations, it brought not Mr. Evans. Seven years, the time stipulated in the contract which had been signed between them, had elapsed, and not a vestige had transpired respecting him; every part of the agreement hitherto in force had been punctually fulfilled, and nothing now remained for the knight but to go in *propriâ personâ*, and take possession of the prize which dame Fortune had so considerately cast into his lap.

By this hey-presto trick of the bandaged goddess, behold sir Owen Singleton now transformed from the plodding, speculating merchant, to the country gen-

tleman; and instead of being tied to the desk with joints stiffened by a contracted position, and eyes wearied by poring over intricate accounts, now gaily inspecting every nook of his new and elegant domain, and pursuing, with the greatest alacrity, his meditated improvements.

By the word *improvement*, I would not be thought to insinuate that sir Owen had conceived the design of erecting a pagoda, in gratitude to Fortune, for having thus distinguished him, or the constructing a temple to commerce, by way of embellishing his grounds; no, no! his mode of improvement lay in quite a different route, that of turning every inch of ground to account, and by converting the ornamental to the useful, he contrived to add very considerably to his yearly income. Still, though desirous of reaping every advantage, sir Owen was not insensible or inattentive to sublime or beautiful in nature, whenever he discovered it; and so that a fine view or striking perspective could be retained,

retained, without infringing upon his economical proceedings, he was content to have it so; and in one instance, where it was suggested that a delightful view might be obtained of the distant country, by cutting a vista through a pleasure-wood, he immediately complied, but not without reflecting that the wood so sacrificed would, by putting a good round sum into his pocket, afford him something more substantial than a distant prospect of picturesque scenery.

The situation of this spacious domain, which, with all its appurtenances to boot, had thus fortuitously fallen into possession of the Singleton family, was particularly beautiful. Hill and valley, wood and water, judiciously combined to produce their strongest effect throughout; and from whichever point of view the gazer beheld these multiplied objects, he discovered innumerable beauties rise upon the eye, and strike upon the sense; nor could any one, whose casual wanderings

led him through the shades of Myfod Vale, while admiring the works of art, complain of the sterility of nature: for here she had scattered, with a bold and profuse hand, some of her richest materials. In one spot a massy rock, whose broken and disjointed clefts, now bare and glistening in the sun, now clothed with rich and variegated foliage, demanded attention. In another, a dashing cataract, which rushing impetuously over the crags which impeded its progress, and then continued to murmur its serpentine course far as the eye could reach, delighted the ear. Here a natural grotto, deeply excavated in the side of a hill, whose wood-clothed summit exhibited a striking spectacle, invited to repose. There a babbling brook, whose gentle meanders soothed the listener's mind, and raised his soul to contemplation sweet, and deed of holy seeming. But what proved the greatest embellishment in the opinion of its possessor was, as an eminent writer, without doubt, judiciously

phrases

phrases it, a "delicious mansion," built in the modern style of architecture. This elegant edifice, chiefly constructed of the white stone so prevalent in this country, and ornamented with elegant virandas, in order to exclude, as occasion might require, Sol's too powerful rays, was certainly an object which might be viewed as partially by other eyes as by those of sir Owen Singleton: and when marking the contrast which subsisted between this elegant mansion, and the deep and dark woods which shaded it behind, or considering it as harmonizing with the lovely landscape in front, it presented an interesting subject for the pencil of the artist; and sir Owen was not a little vain when he had an opportunity of pointing out the particular beauties of his new residence, to the chosen few whom he thought proper to favour with a sight of them.

Here then, in this charming retreat, probably for the remainder of their lives, would dwell sir Owen and lady Singleton.

To

To the knight it afforded the extreme of gratification; he possessed every enjoyment he desired; he could plan and execute what he deemed improvements; he could still count and sum up his increasing riches; and as for power, he had as much as he ever coveted, that of commanding his vassals, and directing his own family. What more of earthly good could this favourite of fortune wish for?—none—he knew, or at least he thought he knew, when to be content.

When ambition, vaulting ambition, once protrudes itself into the human breast, by what earthly power can it be extirpated? If the victim has already been enabled to take one flight upwards, it only spurs him on to soar still higher, and leaves him no peace till he attains the end to which he aspires. Thus it fared with lady Singleton. Fortune had abundantly showered her favours upon them, beyond what her most sanguine hopes would have led her to expect; a title, as unexpected

unexpected as it had been unsolicited, had fallen to their lot. But what was this distinction, she was led to argue, that had set them above their fellows? little more than the shadow of a substance, which she still eagerly coveted—merely that of city knight, which would die with its present possessor, and his descendants not a whit the better for it: where then was the use of this accumulation of riches, if it could not purchase them something more substantial?

These, and a thousand questions of a similar kind, the good lady was in the daily habit of putting to herself as well as her spouse, till, by dint of argument, and sometimes persuasion, which she called to her aid, she succeeded with sir Owen, although he had fancied a short time before that he had nothing farther, in this world, to hope for—in bringing him to the point she wished—that of being able to advance one step into the "British peerage," in order to have the power of transmitting

transmitting his name, with additional honours, to his posterity.

Money, whether in the end it proves, what it is generally expected, a blessing or a curse, which is never expected at all, has at least the present advantage of procuring its possessor almost every thing he desires; and in this instance it became the master-key to unlock the storehouse of dignity in favour of sir Owen Singleton, and to procure his exchange of the paltry knight, which had hitherto constituted the fag-end of his name, for the more sonorous one of *baronet*, with the right of descent to his heirs-male for ever.

Humility, it has been said, forms the first step in ambition's ladder. Sir Owen did not, as it is perhaps too common to do in like circumstances, cast it away here: meek and humble from his birth, he could not so easily part with an old favourite, and as he continued to mount still higher, it accompanied him. Do not therefore imagine that because he had attained the very

that fabric which he hoped would stand for future generations to gaze at, sat down, his heart dilating with the additional gratification of having been the founder of an edifice which would add lustre to the name of Singleton when he should be no more.

Arrived at this point of dignity, the baronet had nothing further in reality to desire. He revelled in every luxury that could afford enjoyment either to his mind or body. No losses, crosses, or untoward accident, intervened to interrupt his peace, while he continued to glide smoothly down the vale of life; and though it might have been wished that a man, so every way inoffensive as sir Owen Singleton, should have lived for ever, I am under the necessity, as a faithful biographer, of recording his death, by saying that at the age of seventy he was fated to go the way of all flesh, and to be gathered to his forefathers who had trodden the valley of death before him.

The *title*, so much the consideration of all

all the family, now of course devolved to the eldest son: the fortune, as the baronet had always prided himself upon precision, he divided into three equal shares, which he devised to his children, after appropriating a proper sum to his relict. But that the title might be supported with proper dignity, he bequeathed Myfod Vale, with all its appurtenances and restrictions with which he had himself received it, as an accompaniment. By this means he gave satisfaction to all, who, while they resolved to pursue nearly the same path in which he had so wisely walked, wept over his tomb with filial affection and genuine love.

In spite of the resolutions so lately formed, the counting-house was destined to experience a revulsion, by which, after shaking its foundations, it was at length finally overthrown; for could a baronet of the eighteenth century, or the only brother of a baronet, condescend to superintend such a concern? In losing their

their father, it must be confessed the Singletons, though they reverenced him as the author of their being, and in every instance held themselves bound to be guided by his opinion, felt as if lightened of a load that had sometimes dragged them too near the earth; and now freed from the trammels which had hitherto bound them, they began to shake their plumage, like birds that had never quitted the parent nest, and to take short flights by themselves; and so agreeable was this newfound liberty, that they finally determined to abandon the commercial pursuit, and domesticate with lady Singleton at Myrtle Vale.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

THE bow constantly bent would in time lose its elasticity; so the mind, without some relaxation from its constant pursuits, would become depressed, and in the end lose its wonted pliability.

In order therefore to avoid a contingency so much to be dreaded, Hugh Singleton, who certainly possessed an understanding far above the ordinary conceptions of life, endeavoured to solace himself for his rigorous confinement, by devoting the few hours not spent in immediate application to a pursuit that had early taken possession of his young mind. His was not the study of chemical affinities, in order to astonish the world, by the discovery of some wonderful combination, or the more complex one of endeavouring to transmute

transmute the most common to the most precious of metals; these were sciences of too abstruse and tedious a nature for him to enter into, and he left the discovery of the philosopher's stone to such as were sufficiently infatuated with experimental knowledge to search for it.

It was sufficient for Hugh Singleton to content himself with such amusements, by way of relaxation, as came more immediately within his reach, and such as required neither too great a share of expence to obtain, nor the sacrifice of too great a portion of time in the enjoyment. Fortunately for him, as he possessed a mind which required something to dwell upon, superior to the common drudgery of life, he, at a very early age, contracted a taste for collecting what are called curiosities, by frequently seeing trifling specimens of foreign productions exposed in the shop windows for sale. To purchase a selection of these articles, as they struck his fancy, or came within reach of his pocket, and to arrange

arrange them agreeably to their different classes, afforded an employment dear to his heart; while to contemplate his little cabinet, after he had thus furnished it, yielded the greatest delight he was capable of enjoying at this juvenile period of his existence.

Growing with his growth, and increasing as his stature increased, what had been simple amusement in the boy became passion in the man. The young collector of curiosities was now the confirmed antiquary; when being able to indulge this *penchant*, every thing, in his imagination, ranked in value according to its antiquity; and a broken vase, or a mutilated lamp, dug from the ruins of Herculaneum, or a stone imported from the amphitheatre of Vespasian, were, in his opinion, more precious and desirable than the most beautiful modern productions. But although this virtuoso passion certainly reigned predominant in his soul, still it was not entirely to the seclusion of every other; for although

though he was led by it to prefer the possessing a foreign relic to any thing curious or beautiful which his own country produced, still he was not altogether insensible to their merits: thus a general love of order, beauty, and harmony, prevailed throughout his transactions; and by influencing his disposition, softened and harmonized his character. Such was Hugh Singleton, when it pleased Heaven to deprive him of his father; and by transplanting him entirely to the romantic shades of Myfod Vale, a wider field was opened for his inspection, his ideas became expanded, and he seemed, in his uninterrupted contemplation of nature, which now broke upon his enraptured vision in all her charms, to possess a new sense.

What an inexhaustible source of study, as well as admiration, was here presented to his view! and for some time he seemed bewildered as to what path he should be tempted to tread. On one hand, the elegant finger of Flora, pointing to her brilliant

liant parterres, solicited him to become her pupil; on the other, a graver matron, whose blossoms could all boast as bright a tint, beckoned him to tread with her the botanic maze; in short, all nature courted his attention, and he soon resolved to unlock some of her precious stores.

Hugh Singleton then became in time something more than the selfish antiquary, hoarding his useless jumble of antiques, which might have been hid for ages in the dark, and good for nothing but the enthusiast to pore over when brought to light, save to inform us that the ancients dealt in crockery-ware as well as ourselves, and that the current coin of their realms, like our own of the present day, bore the effigy of the reigning sovereign, or the image of the commonwealth. Now, if he cultivated his garden, he was rewarded for the time so spent, by observing the fruits of his industry gradually springing up before him, whilst he enjoyed a double pleasure, by regarding them with the discriminating eye

of a florist, when the perfect shape and vivid colouring of his flowers afforded him inexpressible delight. As a botanist, every herb of the field, and even the grass which sprung up beneath his feet, became interesting; while, as a naturalist, not a gilded butterfly could hover over his gay parterre, nor the meanest reptile protrude itself, without becoming a subject of interest and consideration, as being, alike with himself, creatures of the same infinite goodness.

A mind thus elegantly fraught must be at peace with itself and all around. No coarse or turbulent passion ever found place in his breast, to disturb the serenity he acquired by pursuits like these; but, looking "through nature up to nature's God," he discerned the directing hand of Providence in all, and adored that wisdom and beneficence which give to each its separate situation and its end. Besides, having, from the confinement he was accustomed to in the early part of his life, contracted

contracted a dislike to the "busy hum of men," he now sought that retirement so congenial to his wishes; and had not one passionate desire reigned predominant in his soul, he would have been content to live, "the world forgetting, and by the world forgot," for the remainder of his existence.

The desire alluded to, and which, from its novelty, was calculated to act more impetuously on the mind than a passion already blunted by time might have done, was *family distinction*. The genealogical tree had been planted, and its root taken firm hold; and although its branches at present were but few in number, yet he indulged the hope of seeing it in future produce both buds and fruit to his satisfaction. Perhaps Hugh Singleton might not be quite so unreasonable as to wish that his descendants, like those of the ancient patriarch, might be as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore—he might also have remarked the trouble frequently

occasioned by the being claimed by a long line of kindred, all of whom it is not in the nature of things should be equally prosperous, or well-doing in life; still he ardently hoped that a name established under such fortunate auspices, would not be fated to perish in oblivion—a name which vanity whispered him might one day be enrolled in the archives of glory, as having deserved well of its country—a name perhaps entitled by merit to receive a higher reward than that of an adventitious title founded on the gifts of fortune. To accomplish the event then, on which sir Hugh Singleton had fixed his mind—that of seeing an *heir* to the family name and honours, he reflected as a preliminary, that it would be necessary either for his brother or himself to enter the holy pale of matrimony. This was "a pill bitter to swallow, and hard of digestion," to one who, during the course of his life, could never find time or opportunity to pay attention to females. In regard to the loveliest

liest part of creation, his heart, though naturally tender in other respects, appeared as hard and impenetrable as if cased in adamant; for in him love had never been

> " The silver link, the silken tie,
> " Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
> " In body and in soul, can bind."—

To matrimony, therefore, he had in himself an insuperable objection: it was too late in the day, he would argue, to worship at Cupid's shrine, when his arrows, for him, were become blunted and pointless. The little god must then open his quiver to less impenetrable bosoms, and his brother must then be the Atlas destined to support the weight of the aforesaid honours on his shoulders.

Josiah Singleton, a few years his brother's junior, was a perfectly-different character in most respects to sir Hugh, although habit and education had formed a collision between them, which frequently emitted the same sparks of genius.

With a more robust habit of body, nature also, in the opinion of some, had bestowed upon him a greater share of personal attraction; and although not famed for fluency of articulation, he bore about him a charm in his fine figure, which was sure to operate in his favour. Josiah, therefore, who perhaps would have had no greater desire than his brother to quit a life of single blessedness, but for the propagation of this same genealogical tree, found no great difficulty in obtaining a helpmate in due season.

Behold then Josiah Singleton commenced "benedict;" and that "the married man" might have a dwelling befitting his new state and dignity, sir Hugh proposed the erection of a handsome villa for him, which, that the brothers might continue to act in concert with each other, as well as to dwell in family love, he directed should be situated in the precincts of Myfod Vale. Here then the bridegroom, who, for once in his life, felt the natural phlegm

phlegm of his disposition mantling into something like rapture, sat down with the youthful bride which Heaven had sent him, to enjoy that unalloyed happiness which every new-married pair sees in perspective, but which few are ever able to attain.

In his choice of a companion for life, Josiah Singleton was not so unreasonable as to expect that every perfection which can adorn a female this side heaven, should centre in one object merely for his gratification; he was therefore content with the possession of youth, a strong constitution, exuberant spirits, and a tolerable share of rustic beauty. Reared in the deepest shades of retirement, under the protection of a maiden aunt, Miss Penruddock had not had the opportunity of acquiring what in the fashionable world are termed feminine accomplishments. All she knew was how to handle her needle to advantage, to superintend the management of the poultry yard, with pickling and preserving;

or if necessary at a pinch, she could mix a pudding, or construct a pie, that would not disgrace her husband's table. Added to these qualifications, she could mount her horse, and gallop twenty or thirty miles at a stretch, without experiencing terror or inconvenience if she was overtaken by a thunder-storm, or a salute from Boreas in his roughest style, when he sometimes preceded it. On such occasions as these, she would only button her riding-coat closer about her, fix her beaver firm on her head, and with the exclamation of "Good folks are scarce, it is therefore necessary to take care of number one," or some such trite or commonplace observation, turn her horse's head, and retrace the way home again.

Amongst the few peculiarities that marked the character of Miss Penruddock, was a habit of appropriating to herself a number of commonplace axioms, which she was in the daily habit of hearing from the servants and others around her; these, from the dearth of conversation which prevailed

prevailed in her secluded situation, she found very useful, and at times very expressive also, notwithstanding the caveat thrown out against these offenders by that mirror of politeness, lord Chesterfield; and so habituated was she to this mode of venting her opinions, that almost every sentence she uttered was sure to be embellished by one or other of them.

This quaintness and flippancy of dialect was perhaps well contrasted by the slow and formal mode of speech practised by Josiah; for whilst he was deliberating upon a point, and searching in his own mind for a solution of the question, his wife, before he could give an answer, would step in with one of her old saws, and settle the matter in a twinkling; thereby saving him the trouble of speaking at all on the subject: thus the taciturn Josiah was in some danger of losing altogether the little qualification he might have possessed towards becoming an orator.

From the retired manner in which the

sons of sir Owen Singleton had been accustomed to pass their time, Josiah, as well as his brother, had contracted a portion of that timidity, styled by our Gallic neighbours "*mauvaise honte*," so frequently troublesome to an Englishman; he therefore evinced but little taste for those forms and ceremonies of life necessary to insure the benefit of society; but being destitute of those resources within himself, which his brother could boast of, and finding the fiend ennui, which had never dared to attack him in his beloved counting-house, beginning to make encroachments on his solitude, he was led to bid him defiance, by indulging in a little social visiting with the neighbouring families.

In this posture of affairs stood the Singleton family, when sir Hugh was unceremoniously broken in upon by one of his domestics, who came with much eagerness, knowing his master's desire, to announce the thrice-welcome intelligence of the birth of an *heir!*

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

DESCENDING as quickly as the nervous tremor, into which he had been thrown by this delightful intelligence would permit, sir Hugh Singleton entered his library, where, after desiring that his lady mother should be made acquainted, in due form, with the joyful event which had so lately reached his own ears, he closed the door, to feast, miser-like, on the full tide of joy which had rushed so tumultuously to his bosom.

After ruminating for some time upon a circumstance which had yielded him such supreme delight, he started up, and hastily advancing towards a cabinet which stood in a recess at the lower part of the room, he drew from thence a roll of parchment; this he carefully divested of its

outside covering, and placing it on his table, he proceeded with fixed attention to regard for the hundredth time the *genealogical tree*—that structure of happiness which with his own hands he had taken so much pains to designate. But in what light did he now behold this favoured stem? not as a sapless trunk, which having shot forth two feeble branches, was in danger of withering to the very root? No; on the contrary, he now reflected with rapture that one of these branches had actually put forth a scion, which he trusted would again put forth in its turn, and so on, *ad infinitum*, to future ages.

Bewildered in this pleasing idea, sir Hugh at length snatched a pen from his inkstand, in order to add this sapling to the majestic trunk which he had deciphered with its root firm in the earth; but a ray of recollection darted in to dissolve the charm which hung over him, while contemplating this fascinating object, and to convince him that he could not at present

sent add his nephew's name, because he did not bear one.

Long and tedious appeared the remaining part of the night to sir Hugh Singleton, who found it utterly impossible to sleep; and not more impatiently did the ardent bridegroom long for the dawn of that day destined to present him with his lovely bride, than he did for the morning when he might in person congratulate his brother upon this delightful acquisition to their family. No sooner then had he swallowed a cup of chocolate, his usual morning's repast, than he set forth on this pleasing errand.

The bright luminary of day shone forth in all its lustre, the choristers of the leafy groves poured forth their matin song, and all nature seemed in unison with the harmony that pervaded his breast, while the quickness of his paces soon brought him n front of the villa, where he beheld Jo- pacing the lawn in front of his house lent gravity, as if pondering on the best

best means of supporting the weight of his new dignity; when the brothers, as if drawn together by the same magnet, immediately approached, and uniting in an embrace, murmured at the same moment the novel and endearing epithets of father and uncle between them, whilst joy emanated from the faces of both, as arm in arm they entered the house, to make the necessary inquiries relative to the lady in the straw, and her precious nursling.

The infant which had thus strengthened the fraternal bond between them was a strapping boy, well shaped, fair-proportioned, and bearing in its fairy lineaments, as the gossips strongly insisted, an exact resemblance to its *papa*. This, as Josiah was really a well-looking man, was quite sufficient for Mrs. Singleton, who, perfectly content with the contour of her husband's features, desired no better for her son than that he should resemble his father. After expatiating upon the beauty of the child, the next thing to be considered was the

appellation. But in vain had been their debating upon the matter—the mother liked neither of these obsolete denominations, which she affirmed were "as old as the hills," and had therefore determined in her own mind, that her darling should at all events be christened *Frederick*, ere the messenger returned with Josiah's answer, who, when she heard the good lady's resolution, could not help feeling a little alarmed at so flagrant an act of disobedience, and ventured to remonstrate on the impropriety of thwarting her husband in a circumstance on which he had set his heart.—"Oh, never fear," replied she, "quiet men have quiet minds, and my Josiah will neither mend it nor mar it—*Frederick* therefore it shall be;" and by that designation will he be distinguished in our future pages.

By the birth of his nephew, a new link in the chain of created beings seemed to bind sir Hugh Singleton to existence. A sentiment, new as delightful, had also sprung

of the child became so important to his happiness, that he prevailed upon the parents to let the greater part of his time be passed at the Vale.

"Train up a child in the way he should go," said Mrs. Singleton one day to her husband, as they were sitting *tête-à-tête* after their dinner—"that is my maxim; do you never intend that our Frederick, who is almost five years of age, should learn any thing but to dawdle after his uncle, who, if left alone, would never dream of parting with him? I wish therefore you, my dear, would think of it."

"Time enough yet," said Josiah, who hated more words than were necessary upon any subject.

"Oh, take time by the forelock," said the lady—"I hate to lose it; many children now-a-days read almost as well as you or I at his age, and he knows nothing at all; indeed, I am told, in the present mode of education it is necessary to begin with

with them at two years old, in order to make them good scholars."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Josiah, in a tone which seemed to imply that was an article of intelligence that required no great depth of understanding to discover its absurdity—"well I leave all that to my brother," he continued, "who knows what is proper much better than myself."

Many people indeed might have imagined, and with reason, that the heir of the Singleton family was in the high road to ruin. Indulged even to a fault by sir Hugh, pampered by the servants, and suffered to run wild from morning till night, whilst he committed every little mischief with impunity that entered his head, no one ever thought of offering him any contradiction. The only person in the family vested with authority for that purpose was his uncle, the good old lady, his grandmother, having made her exit from life's eventful stage a short time after this addition to the family saw the light; but

he

he had never been provoked to exert it, save in one instance, when the young gentleman had put his patience severely to the test. It had so happened that the baronet, by way of affording amusement to his nephew, engaged him to assist in planting a bed of choice tulips, which he had imported from Holland at a very considerable expence. This pleased Frederick exceedingly—he hereby fancied himself a person of vast consequence—asked a number of questions as to how long they would be before they would grow, and busied himself to the utmost; all this excessively pleased the doting uncle; he fancied he could perceive, in his anxiety to be informed respecting the flowers, traits of genius which afforded him satisfaction to know he possessed, and symptoms of a taste congenial with his own.

Not long, however, did the young gentleman brood over the knowledge he had acquired respecting the tulip roots; for making his way into the garden a short time

ime after they were planted, and seeing no appearance of the flowers, as his uncle had predicted, he set himself to work with his little spade, and turned over the whole bed in search of them; here he found some just beginning to peep, and not discovering the flowers, as he had expected, he concluded they ought to be placed in the ground again, and proceeded accordingly to fix them with the wrong end downwards; then raking the mould smooth over, as he had been accustomed to see the gardener upon similar occasions, he for the present escaped detection.

It was in vain that sir Hugh now watched the appearance of his splendid tulips; not a vestige of them was to be seen, and the season wearing away, he became, like his nephew, impatient beyond all precedent, and was tempted to turn up the [illegible] in search of vegetation, when, [illegible] discovered the [illegible] the earth, *vice* [illegible] o have been.

However

However he might have been startled by such a phenomenon as a tulip growing downwards in the earth, he was not long in guessing the little culprit who had placed them in such a transverse position, and something ruffled at so *outré* a circumstance, the baronet was proceeding to the house, with a brow not quite so placid as usual, which boded the young gentleman a lesson upon forbearance, when he saw him, the tears streaming down his face, appoaching him. This instantly disarmed sir Hugh of the little anger which, for the first time in his life, he had felt against the offending Frederick, and wiping his eyes, he tenderly inquired what had happened to grieve him?

"Oh, I have lost my pretty sixpence which you gave me this morning to buy a ball," replied the still-sobbing boy, "and I don't know where to find it."

"Well don't let that make you cry, you shall have another to supply its place," taking one from his own pocket, and

and placing it in Frederick's; when the little boy, overjoyed, soon dried his eyes, thanked his uncle, and scampered off to play again.

In about half an hour, however, Frederick was again seeking his uncle.

"Well, sir, what is the matter now?" demanded sir Hugh.

"Oh, I come to bring back your sixpence again," said the little fellow, "because I have found mine in a corner of my pocket," when sir Hugh, pleased with his integrity, desired him to keep them both.

"No, I can't indeed," said Frederick, "because that would look as if I told a story to get another sixpence; so I can't indeed, dear uncle, keep them both."

This frank avowal entirely dissipated all traces of the recent anger which had ruffled sir Hugh, whilst it served to convince him, that if he had been led into an error in regard to his nephew's qualifications as a gardener, he had discovered, in lieu of them, sentiments of probity and self-

self-denial that would grace the character of a hero.

Frederick had now become entirely domesticated at Myfod Vale. Mrs. Singleton having increased her family by the births of other children, the absence of her first-born was neither so much felt or regretted as might have been expected, and she was now content that he should continue to reside with his uncle, upon condition that she received a visit from him weekly, because, she added, "seldom seen, soon forgotten," and she wished him at least to remember his parents with affection. For this purpose then, as it was rather too great a distance for his young legs to reach it in bad weather, sir Hugh procured him a beautiful little Welsh poney; when the princes of Hindostan, mounted on their sumptuously-clad elephants, glittering in eastern magnificence, were not greater, in their own opinion, than Frederick, when bestriding the back of his little Fuskey.

The

The young gentleman was not long in becoming a very expert horseman; and the poney, who knew his master's voice, came at his call, and seemed proud of the burthen he carried, would gallop away with him at his utmost speed, sometimes putting poor Allan, who generally accompanied him, and who had never been much of a horseman, to his utmost shifts to keep up with him. One day that he was going on his accustomed visit to the villa, happening to have outstripped Allan, it occurred to him that if his dear little poney could gallop so finely, perhaps he knew how to leap also; looking about, therefore, for something on which to try his skill in this art, he beheld just before him a cow, delightfully rolled up, and ruminating upon her morning's meal. This, to the daring Frederick, was exactly the object he sought, when putting the poor little animal to his utmost speed, he ran him against the cow; but either Fuskey's legs were too short, or he had not acquired the art of leaping,

for he failed in the attempt, and coming in full contact with the cow, the affrighted animal starting up at the same instant, threw both poney and rider heels over head, in which unlucky position they presented themselves, just as Allan made his appearance.

Horror-struck, the trembling old man hastily made up to the spot, when alighting and lifting up the fallen Frederick, he found him stunned so as to be nearly insensible, and the right arm hanging useless beside him. Poor Fuskey, the companion of his master's disaster, had quickly scrambled up, and as quickly set off towards home, when a boy, who had been watching some sheep at a little distance, seeing the stray courser, quickly caught him, and returning with him to Allan, was by him instantly dispatched to relate the particulars of the accident, and to request assistance towards conveying the invalid home again.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

GREATLY to the relief of Allan, when he arrived at home with the suffering boy, instead of confronting his master as he had dreaded, he was immediately dispatched to apprise Mrs. Singleton of the melancholy event, and to request her attendance; for sir Hugh, excessively alarmed, after having sent for the best medical advice which the country afforded, felt himself at a loss how to conduct the management of a sick chamber, and began to question with himself what an *old bachelor* had to do with the rearing of children? Though I may be thought to have insinuated that sir Hugh Singleton was an old bachelor, I by no means intend to say that he was an *old man;* the adjective in one sense bearing a very different signification to

what it does in the other. This I need not define, as few of my readers are so ignorant as not to know at what period of a single man's life, custom sends forth the fiat of *old bachelor* against him. The age, therefore, of sir Hugh was not sufficiently advanced to prevent him from being very active in every thing that related either to the comfort or convenience of his nephew; and when Mrs. Singleton arrived, she found him supporting the poor little invalid in his arms.

The surgeon, who had not spared his horse on the above occasion, arrived a few minutes after the lady, when, upon examining the patient, he pronounced that he had a dislocation of the shoulder, and a violent contusion of the head. The sensitive uncle felt thankful that it was no worse; and when the surgeon took his leave, with assurances that a short time, with proper treatment and attention, would restore his beloved nephew, he felt as if a mountain of care had been removed from his

you forgive poor Allan as sincerely as I do."

Whether convinced by Mrs. Singleton's rhetoric, or his own reflections, I must leave; but sir Hugh felt likewise, that it was too late to repair the injury that had been done to Frederick, and he therefore spared Allan any additional vexation upon the subject, by not even hinting that he suspected him of inattention to his duty.

The accident which had so unfortunately befallen his little *protégée* had been sufficiently serious in its consequences, to convince the baronet of the impropriety of allowing his nephew to enjoy that degree of liberty which he had hitherto done; for, although he could not absolutely say, that what had occurred was in consequence of the freedom he was generally allowed, still he thought that buoyancy of spirit which had led him to commit so bold an enterprise, might be attributed in a great measure to a want of proper control; and these reflections led him to agree with Mrs.

s. Singleton, when she said, that "as ae twig was fashioned, so 'twould grow." Permitting Frederick, therefore, to remain longer in idleness now, was to act against his better judgment; for it would not only be leading him into mischief, as in the present instance, but would also add a wrong bias to his mind, and sow tares of corruption difficult to be eradicated. To prevent this dreaded evil then, it was at length determined that he should be subjected to a few hours confinement every day; and in order to do this effectually, it would be found necessary to send him to school.

A considerable part of the magnificent grounds of Myfod Vale led down to, whilst they sheltered with their luxurious woods, the beautiful village of St. Amands. Here, amidst several neat and elegant houses, whose dazzling whiteness formed a striking contrast with the rich foliage, which in some points formed a deep background, and in others seemed to intermix

with the buildings themselves, stood one, which, by a large board ornamented with gold letters, and placed over the door, announced it to be an Academy for Young Gentlemen. Here then sir Hugh, who had, from his first residence in this part of the country, been particularly struck with the neatness and picturesque appearance of this village, where nothing mean or disgusting in the common walks of life had taken up their abode, meant that his nephew should make his *entrée*, in order to acquire the rudiments of an education, which he hoped to see completed in a style that would do honour to himself, and credit to the situation in life which in all probability he was predestined to fill.

Independent of that degree of affection which sir Hugh cherished for his nephew, as being the future representative of the Singleton family, having formed a resolution of never marrying himself, he experienced a tender regard for him on his own account; and so necessary had the young rogue,

that could offer; here his beloved nephew might be initiated in the elements of education, whilst he would undergo that species of confinement which he now found so necessary; here he could also see him every day, if requisite, and be an eye-witness of his improvement; and here, as soon as he was perfectly recovered from the effects of his fall, did sir Hugh immediately send him.

Novelty, which is said to possess charms sufficient to fascinate alike every fancy, now held out a tempting lure to the young mind of Frederick, which induced him to listen with pleasure to her syren voice, when she urged him to agree to the proposed plan. Ignorant alike of school discipline, and the entire change he must, perforce, experience in quitting his home, he thought only of associating with beings light and airy as himself, with whom he might frolic at his ease, and experience the delight of learning how to play at trap-ball, peg-top, and an hundred other games so diverting

verting and exhilarating to the mind
outh.

The morning at length arrived, jocun
as his "young dream," in which Frederic
was to be conveyed to the seminary, an
Allan had received orders to be in attend
ance early with the carriage for that pu
pose; but when the vehicle arrived at th
door, the new pupil of Mr. Bonus was no
to be found. Alarmed, sir Hugh began t
fear that dislike to going to school wa
the cause of his absence; he therefore dis
patched servants immediately in pursui
of him, half resolving in his own mind
that if it were indeed the case, he would
not proceed, even though matters had gone
so far between them. The little runaway,
however, had no intention of giving them
the slip, and replied to the questions put
to him on his return—"that he had only
been to bid farewell to his garden, and his
favourite trees in the park, and kiss dear
Fuskey before he left him." This mark of
sympathetic affection could not but delight

sir Hugh, who possessed a heart so open to the melting sympathies of nature, and who augured much in favour of a mind upon which local objects could make such an impression, at so early a period of his existence; and whilst his eye glistened with an innate satisfaction, his heart throbbed with an additional glow of tenderness towards the object of his love.

A short drive soon brought the party to St. Amands, where the master of the "academy," who thought himself honoured in the instruction of a pupil of such distinction, stood ready to receive him; and having introduced Frederick to his future associates, he conducted the baronet to his private study, in order to settle preliminaries in regard to tuition, &c. While here, the baronet could not help inserting a clause in the agreement respecting undue severity, which he hoped Mr. Bonus would not put into effect, even if he should find it necessary, in regard to his pupil; but

but which, the partial uncle added, "h trusted would not be the case."

Nothing remained then for the new pupil, but to take an affectionate leave of his uncle, and a scarce less tender one of Allan, who, whilst a tear moistened his cheek, promised to water the garden, and take great care of Fuskey, ere he bounded off to join his youthful playmates, happy in the prospect which presented itself to his delighted imagination.

Mr. Bartlett Bonus, the master of the seminary to which Frederick Singleton had thus been conveyed, was in the main a conscientious and a good man. His learning, perhaps, had it been measured by the rules of Aristotle, might not have been found so deep as that of the ancient philosopher, yet it was by no means an article in which he was thought deficient. He represented himself as capable of teaching the Latin tongue, and could also dabble in the rudiments of Greek, which, with his native English, and a competent knowledge

ledge of figures, constituted the sum-total of his acquirements. The living languages, when Bartlett Bonus was a boy, had not been so much cultivated as they are in the present day, when to be detected in not understanding *French*, *Italian*, and *German*, makes a man shrink within himself, and feel as if he knew nothing; he, on his part, therefore, had been content to acquire what he did, which, with sound principles of honour and integrity, constituted him, as he thought, and as his father, the Rev. David Bonus, thought also, a very proper instructor for youth.

The aforesaid Rev. David Bonus was the pastor of a small benefice in the parish of —— in North Wales, where he reared his numerous family in all the simplicity that reigned around him; and although possessing in himself all the characteristic mildness that marks the Welsh, he was yet firm in supporting every cause, which came within his cognizance, that had *right* for its basis, and none more than the particular

ticular tenets of his religion. Educated i
the old Church of England establishmen
he had been ever taught to hold fast hi
orthodox opinions; and in defiance of th
modern doctrine of the *new light*, or wha
is called evangelical principles, had they
ever burst upon his ear to confound and
puzzle his understanding, he would have
girded on the armour of *truth* furnished
by sacred writ, and by that means resisted
their seductive language. But secluded in
his retreat, far from the "busy hum of
men," no such discourses ever reached the
hearing of the worthy pastor; they were
reserved in latter days for the ears of his
son, who, trained in all the sound princi-
ples so uniformly practised by his father,
found it difficult to admit the rationality
of the new-fangled opinions which were
every day broached, and which even tended
to set the church against itself. A spirit of
toleration had indeed gone abroad, allow-
ing every sect to unite their efforts in aid
of what they deemed the good cause, yet
I fear

I fear (for who is perfect?) that there existed a great lack of charity in regard to this article in Mr. Bartlett Bonus, arising either from the natural composition of the man, his bringing up, or from circumstances of a distressing nature which had fallen more immediately under his own observation. Abhorring therefore all sects and all persuasions, that tended, in his own mind, towards undermining that mode of religious worship which had been established in the kingdom, equally for the benefit of those who follow it and the welfare of the state, Mr. Bonus felt proud upon all occasions, when called upon, to avow himself a member of the *Established Church.*

Indulging these principles in their fullest extent, almost the first question put by Mr. Bonus upon the arrival of any new pupil was, to inquire if they were dissenters from the church? and although he was even arbitrary in regard to his own opinions, yet he hated controversy on the subject,

subject, and could not endure to enter into an argument on a question, where, although he possessed the will, he might want the power to convince. Thinking thus, he avoided, as much as possible, the associating with people who thought differently with himself; and by refusing to admit any under his roof who did not profess the same creed with himself, he not only steered clear of all arguments upon a topic he had no relish to discuss, but avoided taunts and bickerings, which were sometimes apt to arise upon similar occasions amongst those committed to his charge.

These precautions, which some may deem unnecessary, might not have been so fully put in force, had not an incident occurred in the village, which, whilst it strengthened and confirmed him in opinions so rigidly adhered to, shewed the folly of following those who, borrowing the cloak of religion for sinister purposes, care not to what lengths their imprudent and frantic zeal may hurry them.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

THE beautiful village of St. Amands was one of those delightful spots which appear to spring up as if by enchantment; and from the corresponding uniformity of the whole, a spectator, without any violent stretch of fancy, might be led to imagine that the wand of some powerful magician had embodied every edifice.

Situated at the foot of a mountain whose fir-clad summit sheltered it from the piercing effects of the north, this delicious little village opened on one side to mingle with the woods of Myfod Vale, whilst on the other it admitted a winding road, which led from a small market-town about two miles distant. Here the religiously-disposed inhabitants of St. Amands went every Sabbath to worship their Creator,

Creator, the length of the way being held as nothing in the estimation of a Welsh family, who, accustomed to scramble over their hills and mountains, either on foot or on the backs of their diminutive poneys, never seemed to feel the loss of a public edifice for that purpose in their own village.

A short time, however, after the establishment of Frederick at the academy of the good Mr. Bonus, an itinerant Methodist preacher, who, without doubt, felt more concern for their spiritual welfare than the good people themselves, and willing, according to his protestations, to conduct them the nearest road to heaven, undertook to teach them their duty at home. For this purpose then this soul-saving gentleman engaged what had once been a barber's shop, and converting it into a conventicle, he duly held forth in it, three times a-week, to such as thought proper to attend him. At first his hearers were but few, and it was not until his jargon

jargon struck upon the ears of some of these unsophisticated people, who perhaps thought it the more wonderful for being the less understood, that his followers and his fame increased.

If there was one sect of those denominated dissenters from the established church which Mr. Bonus disliked more than another, it was that styled *Methodist;* and to have them now fulminating their pernicious doctrines under his very nose, annoyed him excessively, and more particularly so as he feared, and very justly, their influence upon many of his unlettered neighbours, who might, he thought, be drawn in to suffer, both in mind and pocket, by such a misguided set, who had wiles and stratagems at will to effect their artful purposes; but, as I said before, the good man disliked religious controversies, and therefore determined for the present to remain neuter, and suffer things to take their course.

Not long, however, had this sublime preacher

preacher continued to hold forth, and the people to hearken to him, when one morning a poor woman, whose husband rented a small farm on the outskirts of the village, called on Mr. Bonus, who was regarded upon all occasions, whether of disputes or calamities among them, as the oracle of the place, to ask his advice. Her daughter, she said, who used to be as happy and lively as any one in the village, did nothing now but go moping about by herself all the day long, and behave as if her head was turned; and though she had asked ghostly advice of their spiritual teacher, Mr. Cramptext, who had never failed to give it, still she had every day grown worse instead of better; "and I fear, sir," added she, "that unless you will be so kind as to tell us what to do for poor Mary, she will lose her wits indeed."

"Mr. Cramptext, did you say?" reiterated Mr. Bonus; "and has your daughter then, mistaken woman, been suffered

to

to be a frequent hearer of Mr. Cramp-text?"

"Yes, sure, sir; what could her father, as well as myself, do better than to send our children to hear the gospel preached, and have them instructed how to save their poor sinful souls? but I don't know how it is, ever since she went to the last *love-feast*, she seems as if she had been moon-struck, and had something very particular on her mind."

"And cannot you prevail upon her to disclose what it is that troubles her?" he considerately inquired.

"Alas! no, sir! all she says is, that she is become very wicked, that she has done something wrong, and that she is a poor lost creature; so that, unless you, sir, can persuade her to hear reason, my mind misgives me that she will be lost indeed."

"Well, my good woman, I will certainly see your daughter," replied Mr. Bonus, in answer to her entreaties, "but I fear I can give you but little comfort.—

Poor

Poor infatuated people!" ejaculated he, as the woman took her leave, in order to return home, "how are you entangled in the briars and brambles of superstition, while you shun the beaten path which lies open to the gospel before you!"

Although hating to interfere in any thing which related to Cramptext, for he knew it was such as

> "He who pierces deep the tortur'd breast,
> And stirs the terrors never more to rest,

he had yet too much of the milk of human kindness in his composition to remain neuter in a case like the present, where he saw the shocking effects which this fellow's wild and extravagant precepts were likely to produce upon the mind of this innocent girl; and where the mother, if he might judge by her sanctified appearance, and the religious jargon which she had adopted, was speedily travelling the same road: in order, therefore, to preserve these deluded people from further taint, he lost

no time in making them the promised visit.

On his approaching their dwelling, a small solitary building, nearly surrounded by deeply-embowering trees, a solemn stillness reigned around, save, as he crossed a little garden-plat stuck full of flowers before the door, a plaintive female voice, chanting a Methodistical hymn, struck on his ear. It was poor Mary's, who, on opening the door, he beheld sitting alone, pale as a statue, her hair in disorder, her hands clasped together, and the acutest misery depicted in her sunken cheek. Upon the entrance of Mr. Bonus, she started, and for a moment regarded him; but so deep was the distress under which she laboured, that she had not courage to make an effort in order to hide it; and again her head sunk on her bosom, while her eyes became fixed, and refusing, as it were, to regard all outward objects, she became wholly absorbed by something which engrossed her within.

Struc

unless he himself should grant her permission.

After patiently attending to this poor girl for some time, Mr. Bonus at length discovered that she, in concert with several others, had been led to attend what they called a *love-feast*, where the initiated of Cramptext's followers were enjoined to watch during the night in the conventicle, and where, amongst other absurd ceremonies instituted by the sect of which Cramptext professed to be a preacher, was that of publicly confessing their sins, upon penalty of the severest anathema their preachers could thunder forth against them. This was a part of their doctrine with which Mary Waters was hitherto unacquainted, and having, perhaps, no very flagrant crimes with which to accuse herself, she felt at a loss how to answer when it came to her turn to be called upon, and by remaining silent, seemed to give a tacit refusal to the complying with the injunction.

To have any of his fundamental rules disputed, though only in appearance, and that too by a puny girl, enraged the dogmatical preacher beyond endurance; and casting up his eyes, and elevating his hands towards that heaven which his fanatical discourse continually blasphemed, he proceeded to pronounce judgment upon the innocent offender, by denouncing her as a creature lost to every means of salvation through her disobedience, and doomed to the pains and penalties of everlasting misery.

Terrified at so dreadful a denunciation, thus publicly hurled against her, poor Mary shrunk with horror, while she regarded herself as one driven out from the society of the good in this world; for who, she questioned, would countenance any thing so wicked as she was pronounced to be, and deprived of all happiness in that to come? and since that terrible night, her head had drooped in despondency,

peace

peace had fled her pillow, and melancholy marked her for her own.

Cramptext, who loved to torture the victim now completely in his power, sometimes attempted to sooth her with his whining cant, which only served to bewilder, like an opiate, which, whilst it benumbs the faculties of the wretched patient, never fails to engender frenzied visions in the brain; and at others he pretended to alarm her with his violent accusations, and threatenings of concomitant punishment, till reason tottered on her throne; and had not Mr. Bonus at this period kindly stepped in to her relief, she would, to use her own phrase, have been a lost creature indeed.

By the mild persuasions and convincing arguments, however, of this benevolent man, poor Mary Waters was enabled, in a short time, to discover, through the melancholy mist that enveloped her, the pernicious and dangerous tenets in which she

had indulged; and as she regained a portion of her former tranquillity, Mr. Bonus prevailed on her to renew her former promise of abstaining, not only from his meeting, but of abjuring altogether the heterogeneous nonsense which he had instilled into her mind, and give him up for ever.

Here then was a subject of exultation for Mr. Bonus; he had succeeded in bringing one stray sheep back to the fold; "and why," he questioned, as he plumed himself upon the circumstance, "why may I not succeed in convincing others also of their errors, as well as Mary Waters? and if I only save another of these deluded people, my recompence will be sufficient for the trouble it may cost me."

Thus, in the warmth of his zeal, argued the good man, forgetting his former resolution of remaining neuter in this business, while he resolved from henceforth to take up arms, offensive and defensive, against

against Cramptext and his satellites, till he should be able, if possible, to expel them the village.

Hostilities from this moment commenced between those of the inhabitants who were for, and those of the inhabitants who were against, the Methodists. Several covert acts of disturbance on the part of the latter, during their hours of holding forth, were winked at by Mr. Bonus, whilst those of his party, observing him so passive, grew more daring in their attacks, and went even so far as to create serious causes of complaint against them, when a circumstance happened which demolished the tottering barriers which caution had set up, and hurried many of the opposing party to acts of open and unrestrained violence.

Mary Waters, although she had been particularly careful not to violate the promise she had given to abandon Cramptext herself, had not been able to prevail upon her parents to follow her example;

for so bigoted were they in the favour of one who could send them to heaven at his pleasure, that nothing but the deplorable state in which they beheld their daughter, and the kind of necessity they felt for complying with the advice given by Mr. Bonus, could have induced them to let her so far follow her own inclinations. They therefore continued to attend, to wonder at, and to applaud the artful preacher, as usual.

Not long, however, were things destined to continue in this way. Farmer Waters, who, on most occasions where courage was necessary, possessed nerves of steel, and a heart of adamant, yet, at the soul-appalling doctrines held forth by Cramptext, he felt his heart sink within him, whilst he acknowledged himself a very coward. Doubts, terrors, and uncertainties, by degrees shook his frame, and bewildered his imagination, till feeling too much ashamed to confess the tremors he laboured under, or too proud to acknowledge

ledge he had been pursuing a phantom which he had been told would lead him astray, he suffered his fears to ferment and agitate his brain, till he became in reality, what his daughter might have been eventually, a wild and raving maniac.

CHAPTER VIII.

Brushwood Farm, the residence of poor Waters, so lately the seat of honest industry and content, now exhibited a scene of bitter desolation and misery—a weeping wife, lamenting children, sorrowing domestics, and the head of all these chained to his bed in frantic delirium, incessantly raving upon faith, sin, the elec and the woes of a world to come.

Here was a sight calculated to melt t most obdurate. Who could behold ho

honest and useful member of society, a good parent, a worthy master, and an affectionate neighbour, reduced to so deplorable a situation, without feeling the sincerest compassion, while he was led to execrate the author of his sufferings? No one. A general sentiment of dislike and horror towards Cramptext now pervaded every bosom, and it was unanimously agreed throughout the village, that the next time this agent of mischief should mount the rostrum, he should receive a salute that would render it his last, unless he possessed a greater share of perseverance than they gave him credit for.

"By jingo!" exclaimed a young man, who had long been an admirer of the unfortunate Mary, "if the parson wont decamp quietly, he shall ride the wooden horse to help him on his journey; I have a tight little crab-stock here," brandishing a huge cudgel which he held in his hand, "that will do neatly for the purpose; and,

and, by the lord Harry! he shall be made to mount it."

"And I," replied another, "have a stock of choice eggs, of which the dearly beloved shall certainly have a sample before he takes his farewell of us."

"Ay, ay!" re-echoed a third, "we will take care to put something in his plate, so that he shall not go empty away, I warrant him."

Thus the spirit of revenge had gone abroad, and each resolved, in his own way, to annoy the hypocrite, who, it was now discovered, had, besides having terrified poor Waters out of his senses, and gone nigh to deprive his daughter of hers, preyed upon and cajolled many people out of different sums of money, besides quartering himself upon one or other of the simple parishioners, every time he came to St. Amands, for bed and board; when at such times the adorable Mr. Pretext must have some little delicacy in dinner, and the same, by way of even-

ing regale after the fatigues of the day; so that the consumption of fowls and bacon became unusually great, and but few remained for the good wives to take to market as formerly. This at length became an injury, felt by the husbands in many families, which cried aloud for redress; and though a burthen brought upon themselves, as almost every one felt himself aggrieved more or less, all were equally eager to shake it off, and prepared themselves for resistance accordingly.

When Cramptext again made his appearance at the village, upon entering the conventicle, he was highly flattered by observing a more numerous assembly to greet him than usual; and attributing the circumstance to the irresistible force of his eloquence, he began to hold forth with all his energy, regardless of the winks, titterings, and even murmurings, which were passing around him.

"Brethren, ye must *believe!*" exclaimed the exulting preacher, extending his right arm

ng himself on tiptoe, as he
ust *all believe*, or ye cannot
I tell you that a *pig* is no
carpet, than king George
ent are for the kingdom of
they believe in the works
resent, my brethren, ye are
the bondage of sin. Now
e, I ask? Why a place of
shall find no safety in *sin*;
ll be swept away by the
ruction, unless ye all be
ve."

,?" cried one of the hostile
ith your leave, good Mr.
as you are, we will first try
it;" when a signal was im-
n to commence the attack,
neezing, blowing of noses,
annoyance of this elucida-
l, who, although somewhat
h a reception, was by no
ashed by the singular in-
raising his voice a note or

two

two higher upon the occasion, he again continued—"Some among you there may be, who unfortunately want understanding to appreciate what I say, and are thereby rendered unable to find out the right path which leads to salvation; but they are to be pitied, yea, much to be pitied, brethren, for it is all owing to the want of cultivation; for if the senses are not cultivated, how is it possible that the people can have understanding?"

"We have understanding enough," murmured Mary Watson's admirer, "to prevent us from hearkening much longer to your nonsense." What was at first only simple sneezing and coughing, now became groans and hisses among the majority of the community.

"Shame, shame!" cried a demure-looking man, in something like a clerical habit, one of the righteous fraternity, who appeared to be a dealer in meekness—"is the evil one come amongst you to tempt you to act wickedly? Have you no reverence

verence for a godly teacher who is praying that you may all be saved?"

Here the tumult becoming too violent to pass unheeded by Cramptext, and willing to try what effect a conciliatory address would have, he again began—"Brethren and friends, I come among you as St. Paul did among the Macedonians; but as Alexander the coppersmith did to him, so you seem disposed to do to me. Yes, I said *Alexander the coppersmith*, for I would not have you believe that I meant that Alexander called *the Great*—no, he was a blood-thirsty man, delighting in battles, and the death of those he called his enemies, seeking power instead of studying humility. Humility is a beautiful attribute, and I, brethren, profess myself to be humble—humble even to——" Here the mouth of the preacher was unfortunately stopped by a copious stream darting full in his face from a well-directed syringe; when highly irritated by such an unexpected attack, and shaking his ears, in order

order to dispel the streaming fluid from his inundated visage, he loudly vociferated —"Oh! ye lost and misguided sinners, ye know not what ye are doing; the cockatrice's eggs, which ye are hatching, will (are you aware of it?) sting you to death." Here a loud laugh at the quaintness of his expression wound him up to the highest pitch of anger, and he shouted in their ears—"*Oh* ye *vipers! ye sarpents!* how shall ye escape the d—a—n of h—ll?"

All now became anarchy and confusion; the barriers of decorum had been trodden down; outrage followed outrage, and insult succeeded insult, when some of the most staunch of his followers rallied round Cramptext, with the intention of protecting him from the attacks of the now-infuriated people, who, rendered desperate by his threatenings and offensive language, seemed disposed to show the mischief-maker no mercy, but by pelting and otherwise mauling him with every offensive weapon in their power to drive him

him from the village, never more to return.

No person, however irritated or incensed against their bitterest enemy, could wish him in a more forlorn or destitute situation than that in which the astonished Cramptext now found himself, who, upon descending from the elevation where he had been holding forth, literally believed it necessary to fly from his determined pursuers, in order to secure his life! In this attempt however he was unsuccessful. Every avenue throughout the village, by which he might have escaped, was now closed against him; and every way he turned presented enemies armed with hostile weapons to his view. Here, in order to bar his retreat, stood one with a basket of addled eggs—there, another with buckets full of muddy water ready to salute him—some richly bespattered him with mire, whilst others stood ready to hoist him across a long pole, which they denominated riding the wooden horse; in short, the

the unlucky wretch was so loaded and disfigured by the different accumulations with which he had been greeted, that he seemed totally changed from the figure which he exhibited but an hour before. Exhausted at length by the many efforts he had made to escape, he was scarcely able to crawl, when luckily, on turning an angle, he perceived the door of a small cottage invitingly open; through this he rushed *sans cérémonie*, and instantly securing the bolt withinside, found for the present the shelter and security he sought; no one being sufficiently daring to attempt the dislodging him in his retreat.

In this cottage, then, tenanted by a single female in the vale of years, Cramptext found a refuge from his pursuers; and although its mistress did not rank in the number of his followers, she had still sufficient kindness in her composition to prompt her to open her door to the miserable-looking being before her, whilst she afterwards assisted in cleansing him from the

the filthy offerings which had so gratuitously been showered upon his head.

Here Night drew her sable curtain around the discomfited hero of the foregoing drama, and the clamour respecting him having gradually subsided, each of his opponents drew off towards their respective homes, exulting in their exploits, and eagerly prophesying the downfall of one who had been the origin of so much evil among them.

Ere the morning had sufficiently dawned to distinguish objects very clearly, Cramptext decamped from his hiding-place, and was far away from St. Amands, before any one thought of inquiring after him. But it was not with the intention of taking a final leave of the village, where he had met so unexpected and unpleasant a reception, that he had thus secretly stolen off—no, he quitted it only with the intention of procuring a reinforcement, and returning with redoubled zeal to the attack, in order to convince these reprobate sinners, by

by the united efforts of himself and friends, of the wickedness and impiety of which they had been guilty, in thus daring to assault one of the *elect*.

Early then in the following week, this indefatigable personage, whether instigated by zeal in a good cause, or actuated by a wicked spirit of revenge, we leave casuists to determine, returned once more to the field of action, accompanied by two of his brethren, workers in the same vineyard, and whose eloquence he calculated to be invincible. The inhabitants of St. Amands also, for the greater part, had not been inactive during his absence, but had prepared, in case he possessed the hardihood to return, to give him a warm reception. They had also predetermined neither to be cajolled by his sophistry, nor deterred by his threats, from driving all of the sect who came in the light of itinerant preachers from the village.

Poor Watson, chained to his pallet of straw, still lay a miserable memento of the fatal

fatal effects of his wild and enthusiastic doctrines; whilst poor Mary, with shattered nerves, and a brain still unsettled, had been driven from her father's roof, in order to preserve the remnant of intellect which remained. These were objects whose never-to-be-forgotten injuries, independent of lesser evils that had occurred in consequence of the intrusion of this hypocrite, that were a constant excitement of detestation and revenge.

In order therefore to meet Cramptext on his ground, every offensive and annoying weapon that could be transferable was collected in order to be employed against him; and no sooner had he mounted his rostrum, and begun to hold forth to the few who pertinaciously adhered to him, than the tumult began, and a scene of confusion ensued difficult to describe, and which could only be equalled upon a similar occasion.

Victory for a length of time extended her fluttering pinions alike over both parties;

ties; and it remained doubtful in the opinion of many whether the besiegers or besieged would come off conquerors. Cramptext continued with appropriate contortions, both of face and body, to bellow out his denunciations in the ears of his assailants; whilst his followers, clasping their hands and rolling up their eyes, seemed to defy the power of Satan in the shape of the rabble without, till continual shocks, levelled unceremoniously, obliged them to change their position, and seek for safety in flight.

The warfare at length became so general, that friends were scarcely distinguishable from foes, all was so completely mixed in one wild and terrible uproar. Those among the peaceable part of the community, who could find the means of escape, now made their way home: thus the preacher and his satellites, who had done all in their power to bawl down the disaffected, were left nearly destitute. Thus finding it high time to secure themselves,

if

if possible, from farther insult, they, with one accord, rushed from the conventicle, but were soon impeded in their progress by a more powerful party than they were prepared to cope with from without.

CHAPTER IX.

THE whole of the population of St. Amands seemed upon this occasion to be called into motion; each found an excuse which in their estimation warranted their absence from home; some went to gaze, to wonder, and to make their different comments, whilst others became conspicuous actors in the tumultuous transaction. Those who ranked in the higher classes of life exerted themselves to restrain their neighbours in a subordinate situation, whose passions, amounting to fury, were in danger of leading them much greater length

length than either justice or prudence warranted—amongst these was *Mr. Bonus*.

Actuated by commiseration for the unfortunate Watsons, and still more so by the love he bore religion, when viewed in its pristine order and beauty, instead of being disfigured with bombast and fanaticism, he felt it a duty incumbent upon him to aid in the release of the infatuated people, more especially as they seemed desirous themselves of throwing off the yoke thus artfully imposed upon them by this seemingly-bigoted zealot. In order therefore to do this, although in conscience he would not have abetted any act of violence, he winked at the efforts which the good people made for their emancipation, and fearful that they might be led to outstep the bounds prescribed by caution, was amongst the first to warn them of the precipice on which they were standing, and to recommend terms of moderation. Opposition, combined with party-spirit, had spread widely abroad; the very babes

and

and sucklings of the village seemed to have imbibed its influence, and joined heartily in the affray. Amongst the foremost of the group assembled in order to assail the crest-fallen Cramptext and his *quondam* friends, upon their issuing from the conventicle into the street, were a party of Mr. Bonus's own pupils, headed and urged forward by the daring and intrepid *Frederick Singleton.*

The puny hands of the stripling hero were but ill-calculated to sustain the missile weapons of war; but ardent in the cause of driving out those wicked men who he understood had done a world of mischief, he aimed a stone with such unerring dexterity, as to wound Cramptext just above the eyebrow. The blood now streaming from the recent cut gave notice of what had occurred, when one of his friends observing from whence the aim was taken, seized the young antagonist, whom he proceeded to shake with every mark of fury; and hard might have been

the fate of the little champion, had not a party, who recognized him in the hands of the ruffian, rushed to his rescue, and immediately effected his liberty. This however was not done before the preacher had taken cognizance of his person, and breathed a dire oath of retaliation and revenge.

Further to describe the confusion that ensued is unnecessary; suffice it to say, that like all other scenes of contention and strife, time brought it to a conclusion, but not before many broken heads and shins bore witness to the violence of the affray. Cramptext, with his brother teachers, at last effected their escape, though not without much difficulty; and Mr Bonus returned to his home, after conjuring the rest of his neighbours to do so likewise; and as victory had at last declared in their favour, for they concluded their enemy would not choose to renew the attack, they felt inclined to follow his advice, and in a short time tranquillity resumed

sumed her empire over the irritated sons and daughters of St. Amands.

After this ebullition of frenzied fanaticism on the part of the preachers in order to retain possession, and obstinate perseverance on that of the inhabitants to drive them out, the conventicle was for a short time closed; and then, as if to do away all remembrance of the disagreeable occurrence, it was again converted to its original use—that of a shop; when the small wares vended within its walls were more likely to prove serviceable to the inhabitants, than all the bombast echoed through them by the sycophantic Cramptext, and listened to by his deluded proselytes.

Peace once more shook her downy pinions where discord had so lately reigned, and all now was harmony, except in the dwelling of poor Watson, but their disorder and wretchedness still prevailed. For weeks chained to his bed, the poor maniac, with a countenance of deadly hue, eyes glaring with distraction and wild-

ness, matted locks, and a beard grown long from neglect, continued to rave in all the incoherences of despair, or to sink into the pathos of soul-subduing misery. What a subject was here for a wife, for his children, and for his friends, to contemplate! In vain the poor mourners arranged themselves around his bed, hoping to catch a ray of that reason which they feared was gone for ever—in vain looked for that returning health which was to give comfort to them all; whilst Mr. Bonus, ever alive to the woes and wants of his fellow-creatures, did all in his power to alleviate the miseries of the poor sufferer; but "who can minister to a mind diseased?" who can speak patience to a deafened ear, or utter words of consolation to the maniac?

The original calm of the village thus in some measure restored, the late events served only as subjects for the old to gossip over in their hours of relaxation, or the young to wonder at, when the attention of the good people was again arrested by a new

ect, who had been seen for several
unging and lurking about the
and bypaths that formed the out-
he place. This appeared to be a
e of an uncouth and horrible ap-
a creature that could scarcely be
in his proper sphere, when he was
rank with the inhabitants above
l looking only fit to dwell in
d caverns of the earth. One
arcely-human being had been
om the trunk to which it be-
he eye on the same side had
ried away with a part of the
ed to it; this had given the
rrible and unnatural grin,
maining part of the face was
vn, and full of black spots,
ing the venomous toad than
the human species. This
ıtenance was surmounted by
d of black grisly hair, which
nd like quills upon the fret-
e," altogether rendering it

 hideous;

hideous; whilst the body appeared to be nearly six feet in height, of a strong and robust form, although clothed in the most tattered and loathsome garments that abject poverty could offer to her lagging followers.

The appearance of so extraordinary a person at first created in each beholder symptoms of horror and disgust; but as he intruded on no one, and seemed harmless and inoffensive, curiosity prevailed over dislike, and many would, as they became more accustomed to behold him, stop to make their observations; when his eccentric manner and singular mode of expression, whenever he could be prevailed upon to speak, were subjects of still greater attention than even his uncouth figure. When he was disposed to talk, which was but seldom, he would express himself very incoherently, something between a shrewd man and a fool; at others, if not totally silent, he would either hum scraps of old melancholy ditties, or whistle incorrectly a variety

a variety of doleful tunes, amongst which "Margaret's Ghost," or "Death and the Lady," reigned predominant.

A creature of this description could not fail to attract the attention of all classes of people, and more particularly so of the younger part of the community; and it was not long before most of the children in the village had adopted the daily habit of crowding around him, not even excepting the pupils of Mr. Bonus. Here might be distinguished the different dispositions and temperament of youth, as they regarded the forlorn object before them; some who had been nurtured in the soft lap of delicacy fled from him in disgust; others more hardy laughed at and ridiculed him, whilst they bestowed upon him such appropriate names as their youthful fancies suggested as applicable; and the most timid shrunk back, scarcely daring to approach. One of the pupils, a boy who happened to have a large portion of low cunning, mixed with as great a share of mischief in his compo-

sition, one day offered him something very offensive, concealed under a gilded exterior, to eat, imagining, whilst he chuckled over the invention, that he would not be able to discover the cheat, and would thereby afford them all glorious fun—"fun alive," as he termed it.

Frederick, whose soul revolted against taking advantage of any one, more particularly so of the poor and miserable, no sooner discovered the trick, and saw the poor creature in the act of carrying the tempting morsel to his lips, than he rushed forward, and violently dashing it from his hand, drew on himself a look of savage ferocity for his untimely interference. The generous boy, however, did not long stop here; having, with looks of pity, first explained to the mendicant the deception that had been put upon him by his wanton school-fellow, he hastened away in order to procure him something that would make amends for his disappointment; when, could such a countenance as this unlucky being

being possessed, have been capable of admitting a smile, Frederick's generosity would certainly have obtained one from him.

In this way things continued to proceed at St. Amands. The mendicant, for such he appeared by his accepting alms, although he never begged, still retained the same position he had chosen, sleeping, as he was permitted, in the different hay-lofts in the village, when the midsummer vacation commenced at school. Every one who has submitted to scholastic shackles in his youth, knows with what eagerness the time is expected when they may be thrown off, and the wearer, free as air, left to enjoy that liberty for which he had so long and so ardently panted. To Frederick Singleton that time was now arrived, who, with the rest of his companions, enjoyed the idea of returning home, there to dwell with his beloved uncle, and again to see and hourly enjoy his garden, Fuskey, and his good old Allan. Objects so dear now swam before his imagination in

a sea of delight, and scarcely feeling the ground he bounded over, the happy boy proceeded to take leave of all his favourites, animate as well as inanimate, in the village.

Amongst those whom Frederick calculated as being worthy a farewell previous to his departure from school was the *mendicant*, in whom, from having rendered him trifling services, he felt an interest, although he was not a person likely to inspire any thing like affection or esteem. In the morning, therefore, fixed for his departure, before the arrival of his uncle's carriage, he hastened away by himself into a private corner of a little meadow, where the object of his search was generally to be found. Here he was soon distinguished stretching his "listless length" on the grass, apparently half asleep, when, upon hearing the voice of his young visitor, who hailed him in the spirited tones of pleasure, he slowly raised his heavy head to see who had thus disturbed him, when finding it was Frederick,

derick, and alone too, a flash resembling the glaring meteor when it bursts from a turbid cloud, and equally as transient, passed over *his* dark and lowering countenance, denoting something like inward satisfaction at the sight. The next moment saw him on his legs, and advancing towards the innocent boy with a hurried step, then as suddenly stop short, whilst he looked eagerly around him. Frederick, intent only upon the relief he was going to afford the miserable-looking wretch, continued to empty his pockets of their contents, stating at the same time that he was going home, and that it would be a long time before he should be able to see him again. At this intelligence the cripple muttered something to himself, and stretching out his hand, apparently to receive the offering, he endeavoured by a hasty snatch to grasp at that of Frederick. This the youth thought was coming in rather too close a contact with an object so thoroughly disagreeable, and starting back, he threw him the money he had collected, called out

"good-bye," and was out of sight in an instant.

All now was mirth, content, and happiness at Myfod Vale. Sir Hugh again tasted the satisfaction of having his darling nephew once again an inmate beneath his roof, without the drawback of approaching separation for a certain period; and during this period he resolved that pleasure should reign for him without control. His garden, his poney, his favourite dogs, all awaited the presence of their young master, and put on their best appearance to greet him on his arrival. The garden bloomed in all the pride of summer, Fuskey was grown fat and in high spirits; the dogs, whilst they gambolled around him, seemed more playful than ever; in short, every thing wore the most pleasing aspect in the eyes of the delighted stranger, who by turns embraced his uncle, shook hands with the domestics, caressed the animals, and felt himself supremely happy.

Frederick was now in youth's gay season,

son, when all is sunshine, all delight, without even a passing cloud to obscure the prospect of futurity. Oh, why is this brightness so evanescent, these heart-felt pleasures so transient? scarcely is the coveted good of unalloyed happiness felt ere it vanishes for ever, and worldly cares and worldly vexations are substituted in its room.

The hours, days, and even weeks, of his allotted period for remaining at home, had been quickly borne away on the wings of delight; and every thing that could be invented to procure him amusement had been resorted to, when an unlucky accident occurred, which, by frightening Frederick and alarming his uncle, threw a shade over the late pleasurable scene.

Sir Hugh had been much engaged one morning in assorting and classing some new purchases which he had made in the world of antiques, amongst which was an extremely-beautiful Etruscan vase, said to be of immense value, as being just imported

ported from the ruins of Pompeii. The acquiring so rare a production of the ancient arts had cost no little trouble, and still greater expence, to the fortunate possessor, who of course prized it accordingly; but deriving less pleasure from the contemplation of this assemblage of uniques, unless his nephew, whom he desired should imbibe the same taste, shared it with him, he rang the bell, and gave orders for his admittance accordingly.

Frederick Singleton had not yet arrived at a proper age to be ranked among the *virtuosi* of this or any other country; and it was also as equally certain that at the present period his world of happiness did not consist in viewing what he conceived to be old dirty pocket-pieces, half green and half black, with sundry red earthen pots and pans, good for no earthly use in his opinion, because they were much too small to contain any thing. Thinking thus, it was no wonder that he came with a lagging pace when sent for to

to participate in the pleasure of beholding these newly-acquired treasures.

At first the docile boy, seemingly attentive to what sir Hugh advanced by way of illustrating the particular qualities or ornament of each respective piece, managed so as to appear interested in the subject which gave his uncle so much pleasure; but at length becoming fatigued, listless, and inattentive, he threw himself across the table on which the beautiful vase had been deposited for his inspection, and turning carelessly round, with one arm swept it on the floor, where it remained a memento of his giddiness, crumbled into an hundred atoms.

The crash which resounded from the fallen urn, roused sir Hugh from the contemplation of a relic over which he had been some time poring, and quickly turning, beheld with dismay the demolition of all his hopes as to possessing the only thing of the kind; for there had never been another discovered, nor was it expected

pected there ever would be. Horror-struck at the unseemly sight, he seemed incapable of uttering a word; but his countenance underwent innumerable changes in the eyes of Frederick, who, terrified at the mischief he had done, and fearful of the consequences that might ensue, burst into tears, and darting from the room, was soon out of sight of the house, and far from the scene of *pocket-pieces*, *red pots*, *pans*, *Etruscan vases*, and his uncle's displeasure.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

Sir Hugh Singleton, who had never found serious cause of offence against his beloved nephew, since the crying misdemeanour of the tulip roots, now scarcely knew which most to indulge, *anger* against the unlucky urchin, as he termed him, for the irreparable mischief he had done, or *grief* for the loss of his favourite jar. It was in vain that he hastened carefully to collect the scattered fragments, in vain that he attentively applied to each other the corresponding edges; there was no adhesion in the parts, they equally refused to unite, and its beauty, like a fallen star in the hemisphere of curiosities, was set to rise no more.

Again the provoking young culprit rose his view, and he could hardly help questioning

questioning whether he had not been actuated to commit the deed by a spirit of perverseness, to provoke or vex him. Could he believe him to possess so ungrateful a disposition, he should be tempted to abandon him altogether, and consign him to his parents, who might know better than he did how to manage him, a headstrong boy, since love and kindness had failed in the effect; and he ended his mental soliloquy by once more wondering "what *bachelors* could have to do with children."

Fatigued at length by ruminating upon this untoward accident, sir Hugh deposited his hapless fragments in the corner of a private drawer, and went out to solace himself by spending an hour in his garden. Here it was impossible for one so enamoured of nature to remain long without regaining a portion of that composure he had lost, or to continue uninterested in the lovely scene around him. In one bed of sweets he found his assistance required

to support the head of a falling favourite,
in another an obtrusive weed had crept
in to poison its purity, and must be ex-
tracted; here he was tempted to loiter in
order to exhale the rich perfume that
emanated from his roses, there to compare
the exquisite dyes of his shaded carna-
tions; in short, every thing by turns was
sweet, was engaging, and he began to
question within himself, whether the
beauties of animated nature, as he then
beheld them, were not a compensation for
those of inanimate art; or, in fact, whe-
ther the possession of Flora's choicest gifts
might not remunerate him for the loss he
had so recently experienced in his *Roman*
vase?

The natural mildness and suavity of sir
Hugh Singleton's disposition soon pre
dominated over the portion of resentmen
kindled in his frame, whilst it enabled hi
to exhibit the same placidity of count
nance he generally wore, when the b
from the cupola-top gave signal of the
pro

proach of the dinner-hour. Although the good gentleman had been a little ruffled by the events of the morning, his appetite was keen, and he felt no objection to partake of the cheering meal, and returned to the house accordingly, where, upon his arrival, he found the dinner placed upon the table, and Allan in attendance as usual —but no master Frederick.

"Where is master Singleton?" inquired sir Hugh—"is he not ready yet?"

"I thought he had been with your honour," replied Allan, "but I will run and seek him directly;" and away the faithful domestic went for that purpose.

In vain the tempting viands now smoked upon the board; sir Hugh could not prevail upon himself to taste them, for he who would have given a double zest to every thing was absent; and in vain had Allan, after a fruitless search, been sent out again upon one equally fruitless— Frederick was nowhere to be found.

Dismay, accompanied with terror, lest any

any accident should have occurred, now spread its pallid hue over every face. The servants fled in various directions in search of their lost favourite, whilst their master, nearly unconscious of what he did, gave twenty orders in a breath; till at length totally unable to support the tortures of Suspense, who had struck her iron fangs into his soul, he darted out of the house, although uncertain as to what path he ought to pursue.

Within a short distance of Myfod Vale, a lordly castle once reared its lofty head, but ages long fled had witnessed its proud battlements, its spiry turrets, and its massy portals, mouldering into decay. Of this once magnificent edifice, in whose splendid halls the noble ancestors of the present owner, now mouldering with the fabric they had raised, held the high feast with other noble knights and dames, now equally gone by as if they never had been, and nought now remained of all this, save a pile

a pile of moss-grown ruins, grand, picturesque, and matchless, even in decay.

To these ruins, though scarcely sensible of what he did, fled sir Hugh Singleton in search of his nephew, hoping that he might have concealed himself here, in order to deprecate the anger which he dreaded to have incurred. Every corner, therefore, of the lower part of the buildings, was soon explored by the impatient baronet, but not a vestige of the runaway could be traced; he then determined to search a portion of the ramparts which led round the south side of the ruin, and which held out a lure, as being in much better repair. Here he thought it probable that Frederick might have climbed, aided by the broken masses that protruded themselves from the walls; but as sir Hugh was no climber himself, it was necessary for him, in order to gain admittance to these ramparts, to pass through a tower that flanked the north-east angle of the principal court. The entrance to this tower

tower was through a low-pointed and ribbed arch, whose diminutive door appeared half sunk in the earth, whilst the other half was nearly screened by briars and brambles which flourished in luxuriant growth, as if to bid defiance to all who wished to gain an entrance there. The hinges which supported the door, although famed for strength in their prime, sir Hugh observed, had given way, and now refused to support their sinking burthen: a tolerable portion of manual exertion was therefore necessary to force it open, in which, however, he at length succeeded; when an opening was once effected, he was enabled, by stooping and squeezing his body, to penetrate the aperture, though not without damage to his garments, which looked considerably the worse for the conflict. Having cleared the entrance, he observed that all vestiges of its former arrangement had vanished, save the small winding staircase which led to the top of the tower; this sir Hugh hastily ascended, and

and when about midway, he found himself opposite an open space where once hung a door, that led into what appeared at first sight to have been formerly a bedroom belonging to this part of the edifice. Curiosity, blended with a love of the antique, induced him to enter; for although he had many times indulged himself by rambling over these forsaken fragments of antiquity, since his residence at Myfod Vale, this little door had hitherto either escaped his notice, or believing it not worth the trouble of entering; supposing the tower to correspond with the remainder as an entire ruin, containing nothing but its bare walls, he had therefore felt no particular desire to inspect it. Upon further examination, however, of the apartment he had just entered, he fancied he could perceive signs of its having once been the solitary residence of some unfortunate individual, as some remains of furniture were still visible, though fallen much to decay. What might be supposed

posed to have been once a bedstead, now as a heap of rubbish occupied the middle of the floor; on one side the poor remains of an ancient table rested against the wall, with a single old leather chair; whilst on the other stood a worm-eaten trunk covered with dust and cobwebs, the collection of ages; but which, notwithstanding its forbidding appearance, the present visitor felt a strong desire to see opened. In several parts of this mysterious-looking apartment, bolts, bars, and other insignia of confinement, independent of its strongly-grated windows, might be discovered; and these led the baronet to conclude that this must *bona fide* have been the residence of some unfortunate prisoner, who, perhaps escaping the dungeon's gloom, and damps below, might have lingered out a weary existence, and died alike unpitied and unknown.

While commiserating the forlorn destiny of the supposed inmate of this dismal-looking abode, and fancying he beheld him,

like Sterne's captive, mournfully etching another day of misery to add to the many he had already passed there, the worm-eaten trunk escaped his recollection, till raising his eyes from the contemplation of the unhappy prisoner, which, like Yorick, he could scarcely endure to behold, he again encountered it covered with dust, when, in spite of its formidable coat of cob-webs and spiders, he resolved to see its contents. Neither bolts, locks, nor fasten-ings of any kind, prevented the inquisitor from lifting the lid, in order to see what might be contained within—perhaps no-thing, he argued, if he might judge by what was left in the apartment itself; still it again occurred there might be some trifle or other found to elucidate the mys-tery that seemed to reign around, and there could be no objection to his ascer-taining whether that were the case or not.

Waging war then with the host of noxi ous insects, that from generation to gen ration had been in peaceful possession

this territory, sir Hugh at length put them all to flight by raising the decayed lid, when he instantly started back, himself half-smothered by the dust and musty smell that assailed his nostrils from within. This for some minutes prevented the atmosphere around from being sufficiently clear to distinguish particular objects; but the offensive particles having at length settled in different places, so as to enable him to look with more precision, he observed something which resembled different bundles of papers, but which, on his attempting to grasp them, crumbled into dust. One alone surmounted the fate of its fellows; this proved to be a large sheet of vellum, folded carefully, and closely written, but so much injured by the damps and other effects of time, as to be scarcely legible, even had sir Hugh felt himself disposed to decipher it; this, however, he had neither time nor inclination to do, and hastily depositing the scrawl in his pocket, he proceeded in his search,

till, arriving at the bottom, he was convinced that nothing more of consequence had escaped the old traveller's devastation. Every thing he handled gave way before his touch; and whether the papers he had seen were ancient records belonging to the archives of the castle, or contained the more interesting history of the unfortunate, who in all probability had lived and died a captive in that tower, they were now, like him, mouldered into imperceptibleness, and swallowed up in oblivion.

Nothing further presented itself to engage or interest the baronet's attention in this place, and he in consequence took his departure, when he continued his way to the top of the tower; here he could command a full view of the ramparts below—but, alas! no beloved Frederick greeted his longing sight; all was melancholy, ruin, and desolation, with nothing to break the awful stillness which reigned around, save the discordant screech of the restless daws, who found a retreat in the cavities scooped by

by the hand of Time, or nestled securely in the luxuriant creeping ivy by which they were surrounded. Unaccustomed to behold an intruder so near their haunts, they, as if with one accord, rushed forth to salute him by flapping their wings and screaming, till their harsh and discordant notes were lost in the distance; when their visitor, by descending the way he came, left them again at liberty to enjoy their peaceful solitude.

Wearied, and nearly despairing at his fruitless search, for not a corner had been left unexplored, the agitated uncle now quickly bent his retreat towards home; indulging, however, the fond hope, as he passed along, that his domestics had been more fortunate than himself, and by producing the young runaway, would be able to give ease to his heart. This hope, however, in sir Hugh proved fallacious. The servants had been equally unsuccessful with their master; nothing was either to be seen or heard of the fugitive, and all

that now remained amongst them was surmise, confusion, and heartfelt regret.

"Can this provoking boy," questioned sir Hugh, as he now paced his solitary library in all the restlessness of suspense—"can he in a freak have run off to the Vale, where, perhaps terrified at my angry brow, he may have related to his parents a tale of my dreadful severity, which may lead them to suppose me an actual tyrant, ruling their son with an iron sceptre? Or if he should not have gone there," continued he, "then I, by making fruitless inquiries, cannot fail to create alarms in their breasts, even greater than those I experience in my own. They will demand of me their son, condemn my neglect, and should any accident, which Heaven forefend, have befallen him, I should never obtain their forgiveness."

Thus reflecting, whilst he took blame to himself, the disconcerted uncle at one moment formed the resolution of sending immediately to his brother, whilst the next deterred

deterred him from putting his design in execution; at one time feeling awed by the dread of creating unnecessary alarm, and at another he was withheld by the fear of incurring their censure, till at last unable longer to combat these arguments, or to remain in a state of quiescence, when he might obtain relief from the tortures which oppressed him by motion, he made a desperate effort at once to end his doubts by galloping off to the Vale.

"Alack-a-day!" cried the faithful Allan, as he gazed after his master, whilst the tear of compassion stole down his cheek—"alack-a-day! what grief will this occasion to Mr. Singleton, as well as my master! I dare say he would rather have given all his *nonnicks*, that he has been so many years scraping together, than this should have happened. And as to the ugly old *red pot*, that looked as if only good to put on the top of the chimney in foul weather, I am sure that was not good for much;

one might buy as proper a one as that any day for a shilling, I warrant me; and to think the poor dear young gentleman should be frightened from home for that.—Oh dear!" continued the commiserating old man, "bachelors that turn their minds towards so many nick-nackeries, have no business to trouble themselves about children, which are little commodities quite out of their way, and which ought to be left to their own natural fathers and mothers to manage, because they have a sort of an insight, given by dame Nature, into the business—a thing she never bestows either upon old maids or old bachelors."

This ebullition bursting spontaneously from an affectionate heart, wounded by regret for the loss of an object which he had long loved, was not meant as any reflection upon the conduct of his master; but when the mind is overcharged, like a swollen river, it must have vent; and Allan knew not where better to fix the evil he lamented, than in the place from whence

whence it originated, viz. in *old bachelors* wishing to experience the delight of becoming parents, without subscribing to the necessary penalties to enable them to become so, and thus performing by proxy that which they aspire to in reality.

CHAPTER XI.

FREDERICK, the present object of our solicitude, was, during all this bustle and uneasiness at home, journeying in a direction far distant from Myfod Vale, although much against his own goodwill, or in a manner in which he had hitherto been accustomed to travel.

Terrified by the unlucky fracture of the Roman vase, an article which he had been given to understand was of so rare a species, and to which he knew his uncle had affixed a very high value, that a thou-

sand indefinite sensations, all frightful in the extreme, combined to drive him from the house as fast as his legs could carry him; nor did he cease running till he found what he sought, concealment, in a temple situated on a thickly-shadowed eminence, in the most retired part of the grounds belonging to Myfod Vale. Here the heart-stricken boy gave vent in security to the sorrow which oppressed him; and the tear, which had hitherto only trickled down his cheek in silence, was now converted to the loud convulsive sob of agony as the retrospection of what he had done again crossed his sensitive mind. Dreading he knew not what, for having incurred his uncle's anger, for angry, that lowering brow, and peculiar expression of the eyes which he had never seen before, denoted him to be; and fearing that he must think him a monster of ingratitude in making such a return for his attention and kindness, he continued to weep aloud, till a rustling, as if some one was endeavouring

vouring to force their way through the underwood at the back of the temple, caught his attention, when thinking it was some of the servants sent in quest of of him, and ashamed of being seen in so pitiable a plight, he, in order to avoid whoever it might be, rushed out a contrary way to the one he had entered, and immediately found himself face to face with the one-armed *mendicant!*

Surprise, as he now regarded the object before him, arrested Frederick's flight, whilst the creature, mumbling something about kindness, relief, and charity, continued drawing nearer as he spoke, till he approached within arm's length of his victim; when suddenly making a spring, whilst the unconscious boy was searching his pockets, in order to bestow upon him their contents, he seized him with an Herculean grasp, swung him like a dead weight over his shoulder, and darting into the thickest part of the inclosure, was out of sight in an instant.

Terror, at being so roughly handled by so forbidding an object, combined, with the grief he had endured, besides having fasted for several hours, to render him at first very sick, which was succeeded by a fainting fit. From the effects of this the miserable boy was soon recovered by a cool breeze blowing in his face, as he reclined opposite to a small aperture, which opened into an excavation formed in the side of the hill they had traversed; and on opening his eyes to sense and recollection, he again beheld the same dreadful figure bending over him, and again experienced the same heartfelt sickness as before; a shower of tears, however, coming to his relief, he again revived, and raising himself upon his feet, he uttered something in an incoherent voice, indicative of his intention to return home.

"Where's the hurry for that?" muttered the cripple, in a significant tone that alarmed him; "you and I, my young master, have seen each other before to-

day,

f, you know; and now we are
at, we must remain a little longe
gether."

"I can't stay now," tremblingly ar
lated Frederick; "my uncle will wai
me: here is all the money I have,
you must permit me to go home
nectly."

"No, no, my little man, hold the
grumbled the mendicant, at the sa
time blockading the hole through wh
he had gained an entrance; "the se
stars must become fourteen ere I per
you to escape me."

The indignant boy stood aghast, a
his proud heart swelled within him
such an insult. He that had never s
fered contradiction in his life from in
riors, was he thus to be thwarted by
impudent beggar? and as these questio
darted through his brain, they swell
his bosom almost to bursting, whilst h
sternly commanded the fellow to let hi
pass.

"A

"Ay, ay, patience, young gentleman! patience!" retorted he, with the most provoking calmness; "if you are so desirous for a walk, you shall take one presently, but it must be along with me, and in a dress befitting my companion." Thus saying, he insisted upon the trembling boy immediately pulling off his coat, which he as instantaneously stuffed into his own pocket, from whence he also drew at the same time an old ragged discoloured jacket, which he threw over him in its stead; then drawing a clasp-knife from his waistcoat, the ruffian proceeded to slash and mangle his hat, by that means converting it into a slouch, which effectually concealed the features of the wearer; then, passing his besmeared fingers over the cheeks, a-down which still trickled the tears of mortified pride, in spite of his lately-displayed heroism, the gay and happy Frederick now bore the appearance of a dirty, tattered, and melancholy beggar.

Having

Having finished the designed metamorphosis, and regarded his victim with something which he meant for an exulting smile, that rendered his horrible physiognomy still more horrific—"Now, young gentleman," he exclaimed, "now for the walk I promised you; but, mark me," and he unsheathed his knife as he spoke, "if you make the least noise, or by any turbulent action give the smallest reason for any one to suppose that you do not belong to me, that moment is your last—so now for our march."

"Oh! my dear, dear uncle!" burst from the burning lips of the half-distracted boy, whilst heaving sobs choked his utterance, as the unfeeling wretch now dragged him from the rocky hollow that had concealed them, "what will you do for your lost Frederick, or how shall I——"

"*Peace!*" muttered the mendicant, "no infringing upon articles: we are abroad

abroad now, and you know the consequences. Either this," again shewing his knife, " or silence."

The poor intimidated prisoner was now hastily dragged to the valley below, which, equally with the eminence they had just quitted, was covered with an umbrageous wood, sufficiently profound to have concealed any covert act that shunned the eye of day. From thence the cripple directed his steps through the thick-tangled underwood that shaded the side of a brook, whose water gurgling through the low leafy branches that, dipping their leaves, impeded its progress, afforded a pleasing sound. To this sound had Frederick frequently listened with delight, when, by the side of his uncle, he had pored over its rippling waves, or stooped to gather the sweetly-scented flower on its banks. The soothing murmur remained—it was still the same; but the delight of listening to it was flown, whilst

grief,

grief, terror, and heart-rending melancholy, were substituted in its room.

Frederick, with his dreaded conductor, soon emerged from the tangled path they were pursuing into some open fields, whose richly-waving corn assisted in screening them from observation: these they quickly passed, and secured an entrance into a long, narrow, broken defile between a couple of stupendous rocks that frowned magnificence on either side. Here at first they moved leisurely on, as if to recover a little from their former speed; but the descent soon became rapid and alarming to the young traveller, whilst every step they set increased the height of the gloomy masses above them. These towering bulwarks, whose frequent projections threatened destruction to those beneath, seemed to Frederick's sickening imagination to enclose him entirely from the view of man, whilst a deathlike silence, save where the moisture that forced itself through dripping stone fell heavy on

their

their ears, or rushed along the narrow path in rugged channels, reigned around.

As they proceeded farther on, the way became cold, damp, and dreary, for in this secluded spot the sun's cheering rays but seldom entered to correct the damps, or stint the growth of dark and noxious weeds, which flourished in the fissures of the rocks, many of whose thorns had little complaisance for Frederick's tender skin, who, now wearied by the obstructions he met in his passage, as well as the length of the way, declared, in piteous tones, that he could go no farther.

His conductor, now relinquishing the firm grasp by which he had enabled him to surmount the rugged distance they had passed, beheld him sinking to the earth; when regarding the fainting sufferer before him, he, in stern silence, drew from his pocket a flask, and applying it to his mouth, obliged him to swallow a portion of its contents. This, with a few minutes rest, reanimated his sinking frame,

and

and enabled him, with the help of the mendicant's strong arm, to set forward.

The path now in perspective seemed rather to improve. By ascending a gentle eminence it became more dry; consequently they obtained a firmer footing, whilst the chilliness, as they gained a higher point, was somewhat evaporated: the briars and brambles which had hitherto nearly intercepted their passage had disappeared, and Frederick now proceeded with less difficulty; but he was again petitioning to rest, when a dark entrance into a part of the rock which bounded the winding path before them, presented itself as a place of security.

Into this den then the luckless boy made no objection to enter. Worn down with alarm, hunger, and fatigue, to press the cold earth now seemed as acceptable to him as reposing on the downy pillow, and the discarded crust presented by his disgusting companion he could now swallow

low with avidity, although bathed in the bitter tears of regret, as he reflected upon those he had been compelled to leave behind. His uncle, his dear, dear uncle—his good old Allan—his favourite Fuskey—his beautiful dogs—and his beloved schoolfellows, whom perhaps he was destined never more to behold—all now swam before him in imagination, till, exhausted by the retrospection, which occasioned him additional sorrow, he sunk into the arms of sleep, which kindly procured him some hours of oblivion to his woes.

Aurora, with her rosy-tipped fingers, had scarcely unbarred the portals of the east, to usher forth the chariot of the sun, ere Frederick unclosed his eyes to light and misery. The cripple had meantime most anxiously watched the approaching dawn, in order again to set forward on his mysterious journey; and no sooner was his young captive fairly awake, and had

had broken his fast by making an end of the remaining contents of the wallet, than they sallied forth.

Their route, unlike that of the preceding day, instead of leading them through a deep and enclosed ravine, almost impervious to the human eye, now lay over some of the stupendous hills and towering mountains which intervened between them and the interior of Flintshire, over which they had travelled a considerable space, when weariness, and the heat of a noontide sun, obliged them to seek for shelter and refreshment.

In the dreary wilderness which they were now tracing, for the mendicant thought it politic to avoid every thing like a public road, the sanctuary they needed for a long time mocked their search, and they cast their eyes around, from the extremity of the mountain they were crossing, in vain; not the smallest sign of an habitation such as they wanted met their view. Dispirited at the observation, and almost

he; "can't you give an answer to a simple question?"

"Because I had a hasty-news bell sounding in my ears," answered the old woman, "and if I had spoken before it had ceased ringing, I should have lost all the news it was pringing me."

At this instant an ill-favoured cur, hearing the sound of strange voices, darted from the interior of the dwelling, growling and shewing his teeth, as an auxiliary in the cause of his mistress, whilst the alarmed Frederick shrunk behind his uncouth companion for protection.

"Ah, tonte be afraid of the tog," cried the landlady; "he will not pite. Look you, he is as quiet as a little sheep. Here, Tinker, Tinker, come pack, I say, sirrah!"

The obedient Tinker, faithful to the word of command, now retreated behind his mistress, though still growling and shewing his teeth, as the strangers seated themselves in the little stone-floored room, which, as parlour, and kitchen, and hall,

hall, was appropriated to the generality of her visitors. From this sumptuous apartment ran a narrow staircase, at the summit of which a door opened upon a flight of broken stone steps, that conducted to a small potato garden, which, from its situation on the side of the stupendous hill that backed the dwelling, commanded a view over the smoking chimney. Here, besides the nutritious roots that occupied the middle of the space denominated the garden, were a few rose-trees, now richly in bloom, tufts of sweet-william, and a profusion of salutary herbs; but as this was reckoned by the good woman her *sanctum sanctorum*, few of her friends were considered worthy of gaining admittance; and here the appearance of her present guests did not warrant their introduction—"for," as the landlady sagaciously remarked, whilst she cast a suspicious eye upon them as they occupied the first seats they met with—"for her part she could always distinguish a gentleman when they came to

her house;—for why?—pecause a gentleman oft for to look like a gentleman, and if they oft to pe called gentlemen, why they oft for to tress like them, look you." She had been in Lunnon, she said, and had seen much of the gay world, besides a great many strange sights; "why hur once saw the king and the queen, Cot pless them," she continued, "and all the peoples walking pefore them dressed in fine hair gowns; and pesides that, hur have seen the servants," and she tossed her head as she spoke, "of real gentlemen, poil pread and milk in *silver saucepans* for their togs; and if that is not seeing strange out-of-the-way sights, look you, and leaving hur to judge of a gentleman when she sees one, then hur does not know what is."

In this manner the good woman continued to talk at, rather than to her visitors, till a demand for such refreshments as her house afforded, in no very gentle tone from the cripple, by putting her in some

some degree of bodily fear, for the present silenced her loquacity.

CHAPTER XII.

THE house was now speedily ransacked of its contents, in order to afford the weary travellers a meal; for so absolute was the command issued for refreshment, when enforced by the stern expression of the mendicant's remaining eye, that the poor old woman dared not refuse compliance; and so much do we lose or gain by the appreciation of things in different situations and at different periods, and so much are we the creatures of circumstance, preferring at one time what we dislike at another, that Frederick, who a week before would have disdained to taste the slices of fried bacon, with the coarse but sweet brown bread that was now set before him, when

placed in competition with the delicacies of his uncle's table, yet now, when pressed by hunger and fatigue, found these hitherto unpalatable viands both delicious and gratifying. He ate therefore with a *goût* that was astonishing even to himself; he thought nothing was ever half so excellent as this delicious bacon; and he almost envied the remainder of the flitch, as he saw the good woman again deposit it upon the rack that graced the ceiling of her kitchen.

Hitherto the satisfying a keen appetite had been delightful to the young wanderer, but the digestion unfortunately could not keep pace with an overcharged stomach; for on awaking from a deep and heavy sleep of some hours, he complained of sickness, headache, and every symptom of approaching fever.

"Well, to pe sure, my tream is out," exclaimed the hostess as she thoughtfully pressed the burning hands of the invalid—"my tream, as I before said, is certainly come

come to pass; and I didn't see an ugly ragged black sheep come trotting towards me with an innocent white lamb by its side, which, when it reached me, fell into my lap, for nothing, last night.—Oh, my poor boy!" she continued, "although you do look as if you belonged to a parcel of outcasts and vagabonds, yet you may be as innocent and free from guile as the little lamb I dreamed of, and as such I will take care of thee."

For the hapless Frederick now to have proceeded on his journey was altogether impracticable; he certainly could not walk, and to have procured any kind of conveyance, even if the mendicant possessed the ability, might have created suspicion, or led to a discovery of the heinous offence he was thus committing, of stealing a child from its natural protectors, both of which it was his business to avoid: he was therefore obliged perforce to remain where he was, till an amendment in the health, or

death of his young companion, should again enable him to set forward.

For this purpose he now besought his hostess to exert her skill in behalf of the invalid, which she promising to do, the kitchen herbs became in great requisition, and poor Frederick was plenteously sluiced with sage, balm, and pennyroyal tea—simples only to be found in the villager's pharmacopœia, and which frequently prove more efficacious in slight diseases than all the drugs to be met with in the materia medica of Surgeons' Hall. But to proceed: the fever which had thus attacked the unfortunate boy continued obstinate, in spite of the good woman's nostrums, or her careful watching; for being, she said, "a lorn widow, and having neither chick nor child of her own, and her house, Cot help hur, being but little frequented, she had plenty of time to attend him." The invalid therefore was in good hands, for the worthy creature prided herself on the knowledge

knowledge she had acquired in simples, in consequence of which she had for many years been constituted both physician and apothecary to the few inhabitants of the hamlet wherein she dwelt, who, let what would of evil befall them, ran as if with one consent to lay their case before old Alice Muggleworth, whom they believed possessed of a cure for every disease that assailed them.

If repose was deemed necessary for the re-establishment of the sufferer's health, it was to be obtained here in the highest degree; for scarcely a sound could vibrate in the ear, save when the good woman went about the house talking to herself—a habit possibly acquired from the dearth of society—in the soft low voice so peculiar to the Welsh; or that some of her neighbours, which was not often the case, came in for their humble refreshments. The cripple seldom spoke but to demand what he wanted; his only care being to keep sight of Frederick, as if by his pre-

sence to deter him from making any disclosure as to the real situation in which they stood to each other; whilst his frightful exterior, by inspiring a degree of fear in his hostess, prevented her from hazarding any particular inquiries. But old Alice Muggleworth must talk; and as she had nothing else to chatter about, she, like many of her betters, played the egotist, and talked of herself; and to relate her dreams, and other remarkable signs and wonders, which, she averred, she was constantly favoured with, constituted the solace of her dreary life.

Yet perhaps Alice Muggleworth was not altogether so happy as the highly-favoured inhabitants of Scotia's realms, who pretend that they, or their predecessors, were endowed with the gift of second sight; still, in many instances, she was equally superstitious with those who might be said to foretell the death of a relation or a laird, the head of their clan; and as he sat watching her patient through his unquiet

unquiet slumbers, she continued to speak, in her whispering voice, of the black sheep and the little white lamb, which, after tottering towards her, had sunk into her lap, when she would seem puzzled as to the conclusion she was to draw from such an event, whether "the poor boy, look you, was to life or tie.

"*This*," she would exclaim, alluding to her recent vision, "was a remarkable tream to pe sure, considering what has followed," as two or three of her neighbours, by way of extraordinary relaxation from labour, had visited her humble roof—"very remarkable, but nothing like one I once had pefore I lost my poor poy, who went to the wars!" and she drooped her head whilst she raised the corner of her blue woollen apron to wipe the tear that started in her eye at the melancholy recollection. "No! that was much more pertickler than this; if you like, I'll tell it you." Any subject where the marvellous predominates is sure to be agreeable;

therefore united in expressing the wish hear this wonderful dream; and Alice, ter a few minutes recollection, thus gan:—"You, neighbour Dunzey," ad-essing herself to a swarthy-looking man ho sat opposite, "you remember my son, ho, as fine a young fellow as ever king eorge, Cot pless him, had in his service, as inveigled away by the tempting lures ld out to him by a recruiting serjeant, ho was sent for no good into these parts, hen he was sent with his ridgiment to a ace beyond sea, where there was nothing it unwholesome damps and thick misty gs for him to breathe, instead of the pure r of his own tear mountains. Well, look ou, he had not been gone fery long, pe-re a comrade of his comed back upon a *rlow* I think they called it, to see his rents not far from hence, when I, hear-g of his return, and eager to hear news my son, went to inquire apout him, and arned from the young man that he had ft him in London. This account terri-

fied

fied me exceedingly, as I could think of nothing but his having deserted from his ridgiment, and in that case I knew what would be his punishment. Well, look you," added she, "I never slept for many nights, fearing my son should return home, and I not hear him when he called to me; and I became so ill with fright and vexation, that I thought to have died. Suffering thus, I pethought myself to pray to the Lord to take pity on my distress, and that he would be pleased to tell me in a tream, whether my son was a *deserter* or not? and I dare say I prayed in this way above forty nights, when it pleased the Lord to send me the following tream:—I thought that as I was sitting by the side of my fire, I saw the door suddenly open, and a fine young cockerill, in full plumage, but as tall as a man, entered, and came towards me. His feathers, all very beautiful, were of different colours, some being of a bright scarlet, others white; but as he came near me, he drooped his head, till the

beak touched the floor. I then awoke, but could make nothing of my dream, and as I was pondering upon what it could mean, I fell asleep again. I then dreamed a second time, and I thought that I opened a small trunk which stood in my bed-room, and into which my poor boy had put his best clothes, when he left me to go to these wars, and very good ones they were, particklery a great-coat which nobody need to have been ashamed to put on. Well, look you, as I was saying, I thought that I took out this great-coat to give it an airing, when holding it up to the light, I saw thousands of moth-holes in it; this quite frightened me, and I laid it down and took up another, when holding it up, there were thousands of moth-holes in that also; and so on throughout the contents of the trunk—every thing contained within it nearly eaten up by the moths. Well, all this puzzled me a great deal; I knew not what to make of it, and I pondered it in my mind three or four days.

days, when I again prayed to the Lord that he would give me understanding to interpret my dream; and this was it:— *The cockerel* which I saw coming towards me was my *son*. His gay and party-coloured plumage told me that he still wore the king's uniform, and that he had not deserted, as I had expected. The drooping beak of the bird told me that my poor boy was sick, and the moth-eaten holes which I beheld in his garments, gave me to understand that it was a sickness unto death, and I was happy!" Here a burst of grief, however, from the narrator seemed powerfully to contradict her assertion; and no sooner was she a little recovered than one of the party begged to know the result of this wonderful dream. At this time she said her son had been returned to England, in consequence of ill health, and that in a very short time afterwards he had died in a rapid decline!*

Here

* The wish of divining *by dreams* is not peculiar to the old.

Here the coincidence to be sure was striking; and however the more enlightened may feel disposed to smile at the superstition indulged by this poor creature, yet they cannot but admire her ingenuity in causing these chimeras of her brain to tally so exactly with the existing circumstances, whilst she created something like awe in the bosoms of her auditors, who, as they listened to her tale with a sort of veneration, felt inclined to allow her the possession of talents almost supernatural.

The evening soon wore away, and the good woman's guests had retired full of wonder at her superior sagacity, when the cottage,

old Welshwoman alone. The author of this work once knew a gentleman in London, who, setting aside his faith in dreams, possessed a good natural understanding enough, but who indulged a great propensity towards gambling in the lottery; and not satisfied with continuing in bed every morning till a very late hour, he also indulged in a nap after dinner, in order to *dream;* when, if by any means, through the force of imagination, he could twist or interpret the substance of his visions into any given number bearing a prospect of success, that number was instantly secured, as leading ultimately to good fortune.

cottage, left to its general stillness, Frederick fell into a profound and quiet sleep, from which his nurse augured much in favour of his recovery; nor was her faith in this favourable symptom vain. When the patient again awoke, he appeared much easier; the fever, whether owing to a robust constitution, which bid defiance to its encroachments, or to the care of Alice Muggleworth and her simples, had left him, and the weakness inseparable from such a disease alone remained. This she prophesied, with her infallible remedies, would soon disappear, which indeed was the case; for the invalid in a short time was so far recovered, as to be deemed able to pursue their journey, when, with a heavy heart he was compelled to quit "*The Old Crow*," and to take a grateful leave of its benevolent mistress.

Again the travellers bent their steps through intricate passes and byeways, where scarce a human foot, except their own, had ever trod; but as Frederick had still

still some remains of his illness, they proceeded but slowly; nor did his guide think it necessary to hurry on as at the commencement of their route, being now less fearful of pursuit. Travelling therefore short distances in the day, and sleeping in some nook or cavern formed by nature's hand in the night, they contrived to make their way through almost impenetrable paths, till at length they arrived at what seemed to be a haven of rest, equal to the cripple's desires, viz. a narrow rocky pass between two towering mountains.

Adown this ravine, although rugged and steep, poor Frederick, whose shoes were now considerably the worse for the wear, was given to understand he must proceed; and having been woefully convinced that remonstrance in this case would be vain, he evinced no sign of reluctance to the will of his tormentor, save the silent tear which stole unbidden down his cheek, but proceeded quietly along, although the projecting points lacerated his,

his feet at every step, and he was obliged to cling to the arm of his conductor for support.

In this manner they made their way slowly through a zigzag path, at one time winding to the right, at another to the left; now ascending a rugged precipice, next descending a broken declivity, till abruptly turning an angle of a rock which projected its broken masses before them, a sight as uncommon as it was surprising burst upon the visual orbs of the astonished Frederick.

Within a large excavation of the rock, how formed we must leave philosophers to conjecture, whose ravine they had just explored, and whose beetling brow nodded terrific from above, a tribe of wandering gipsies had fixed their abode. One side of this cavern exhibited a blazing fire, over which, suspended by cross poles, hung a pot containing their evening repast; and as the night was now fast closing in, the contrast of the flame, as it threw its broad

flashes

flashes of light on the dark objects around, with the light curling smoke, as it ascended the brown barrier above, produced an appearance both awful and sublime in the eyes of the youthful novice. Opposite the fire was spread a pile of something resembling bedding, on which was reclining a woman of the true Egyptian hue, with a tawny-coloured infant of a fortnight old on her lap; whilst the space in the centre was occupied by a hale old man, whose portrait might have added grace to the pencil of a Romney. As the travellers approached, they beheld him standing in an attitude not quite erect, since a trifling stoop of the shoulders seemed to give him a graceful bend of the body. He had a pipe in his hand, whilst a gentle breeze blew back a profusion of silver hair that hung below his hat, and gave his deeply-bronzed visage, animated by a pair of intelligent sparklers, to view. A long beard, which time had equally blanched, floated on his breast, and gave to a commanding figure

figure that kind of majesty which a fine ruin generally exhibits. These, with a couple of young urchins by way of scouts, stationed on each side just without, in order to give notice of the approach of strangers, constituted the present company.

CHAPTER XIII.

"AH, ah! so the stray sheep is returned at last!" exclaimed the old man, at sight of the mendicant; "and you don't come back empty-handed I perceive, friend Ambrose," glancing as he spoke towards Frederick, who hung back with alarm at this new scene of wonder.

"No, no, slow and sure, father, that is my motto; the chase to be sure gave me more trouble than I expected, but I didn't suffer the game to escape me, and having once nabbed it, here I am as tired as a dog

dog after his day's sport and as ready for my supper—but where are the rest of our friends?"

"Oh, all out a-foraging—we have had but bad success of late," replied the old man with a sigh; "the farmers watch our motions rather too closely, and take too much care of their hen-roosts, while scarce a godly soul is to be found in the villages round to help us; and were it not for a stray sheep which now and then falls to our lot, both in a spiritual as well as a bodily sense, we should be but badly off at present. However, hard as times go," he continued, "we have got a bit of supper in the pot here, and I also expect some of our comrades will return in time to share it."

Ambrose now threw himself upon some of the bedding which had been spread nearer to the fire, motioning at the same time to Frederick to follow his example, who, wearied with his day's journey, and the unusual exertion he had been called upon to

to perform, hesitated not in complying with the request, when sleep soon weighed down his heavy eyelids; nor did he again raise them till the sun, in full splendour, had shot forth his morning beams, and gilded the hemisphere above them.

A confused sound of several voices, as if conversing in a foreign language, now met his ears; he listened, but could make nothing of what was going forward, till starting from his flinty pillow, and opening his eyes to their utmost stretch, he beheld several men and women busily employed, as if taking their departure from the place which had sheltered them for the night. Some were loading two or three miserable-looking asses, who, with characteristic patience, awaited their destined burthens; others were girding large filthy-looking bundles on their fellow-traveller's backs, whilst a parting cup and a good-be-wi'-ye went round. This ceremony finished, the greater part of the tribe set forth on their journey.

The

The cripple, with the old man, who was considered as the father of the community that dwelt in this part of the country, were left behind; the one, in consequence of his late excursion, the other, as being not only their superior in years, but in what they believed much more essential, in that of cunning, or, as they would have termed it, worldly wisdom also. *He* therefore was, by unanimous consent, exempt from all labour, except guarding the women, teaching the children, regulating their arrangements, and settling disputes, which, of whatever nature, were always submitted to his arbitration, and by that all were contented to abide.

With this august personage, added to the society of Ambrose, our hero had now to spend the day, and he looked up to him with a much less feeling of dislike than that which he still retained for his kidnapper, whose hideous aspect and uncouth manners had filled his young mind with sentiments of hatred and disgust. But

But this new ally Frederick felt he could regard without experiencing any of those sensations of horror occasioned by the sight of the other. Nay, he even thought at times there was something pleasant, if not good, in the expression of his fine dark countenance, shaded by his silver hair; and as youth seldom penetrates below the surface, and is never prone to anticipate evil, he, for the first time since he had quitted his uncle's roof, took the breakfast offered him with something like composure.

During this repast, an earnest conversation seemed to take place between the two men; but as it passed in cant terms and quaint expressions, Frederick was unable to comprehend the subject of their cogitation. The eyes of the old man he observed to be frequently turned towards himself, as he raised or lowered his tones, and sometimes he even thought there was an expression of interest and complacency as they dwelt upon his features; but from

the

to some one he had before seen, floated in his imagination, without being able to produce to his recollection the original, till, in the thin figure, dark lanky hair, pale visage, and at times sanctified demeanour, he recognized his old antagonist, the discomfited Cramptext, and with him the two auxiliaries he had suborned to his rescue at St. Amands.

This sapient preacher, whom my readers will, no doubt, be surprised to find herding with a set of gipsies, had in his youth been bred to, and afterwards followed for a subsistence, the respectable calling of a travelling tinker; sometimes trading on his own bottom, when employment was brisk, and at others, as occasion or necessity required, associating with different tribes of mendicants, gipsies, &c. which he met with on his rambles. One day, as he happened to be crying his pots, pans, or kettles to mend, through a small market-town, he was stopped in his route by a crowd which had gathered round a man,

the countenance of the cripple, nothing could be gathered to denote the sentiments passing within, since it was impossible that any thing like expression could, for a moment, dwell on his distorted features.

The day, which to the captive was heavy, dull, and tedious, was chiefly spent by all parties in sleep, or in that kind of listless languor, which nearly amounts to insensibility, when night approaching, the scouts gave notice of the return of the morning wanderers to partake their evening meal, divide their ill-earned spoil, and lay plans for fresh excursions, and fresh depredations on the public.

Scarcely were the whole tribe assembled, when Frederick, whose eyes the novelty of the scene had kept open, thought he beheld in one of these men, although disguised in tattered garments, filth, and the rest of the insignia of their order, features that he was not unacquainted with. For some time this resemblance

to

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whose coat of many colours bespoke him the drummer of a marching regiment. This conspicuous person, who had just mounted a stool, was holding forth in a kind of religious jargon, which he called *preaching*, to the people. Cramptext, observing the attention he excited, now listened, with gaping mouth and extended ears, to the praises bestowed upon him by his ignorant hearers, whilst he witnessed with envious eyes the handsome donations in his favour. Pondering upon the foregoing scene, as he retired again to his solitude, the following soliloquy burst forth—"He talked of grace, of faith, of the new light, and so forth; now why may not I have a portion of this same grace, by which he seems so much inspired, stirring in me? Why should I continue to work so hard, when a much easier living may be got by preaching? Yes, I certainly feel a call, which already assures me I am become one of the *elect*, and that I shall be able to go forth a zealous teacher of those who, wandering

wandering in darkness, stand in need of being enlightened. Yes, I shall be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," continued he, raising his voice, "as well as this same drummer; and if I hold forth as well as he, and of that there is no doubt, as this is already a specimen, why, I shall reap the same advantages." Thus argued the assuming Cramptext; and from that period he became by turns an itinerant preacher as well as a tinker, till meeting sufficient encouragement in his new calling, he grew bold enough to endeavour to establish himself, in the way that has been already related, in the village of St. Amands.

To be at once thus ignominiously deprived of the comforts and emoluments which he had so craftily obtained from the credulity of those innocent people, stung him to the quick; whilst the remembrance of insults so lavishly bestowed upon him still rankled in his heart, creating sentiments of hatred and revenge, whilst

he only sought an opportunity to shew, that

> To provoke him was a dangerous thing,
> His pride would punish and his temper sting;
> His powerful hatred sought th' avenging hour,
> And his proud vengeance struck with all his power.
>
> CRABBE.

From the time that Frederick had so daringly lifted his hand against Cramptext, the innocent boy became an object marked out by him for revenge; and he bitterly swore, that either in his own person, or in that of others, he should make ample atonement for the deed. Good care had been taken to inform himself that the family to whom the young offender belonged was rich, and thus possessed ample means, if properly managed, to make restitution for what he had been deprived of in his late projections; and for that purpose, as well as to punish the young rascal, the germ perhaps of future power and oppression, he had determined to get him into his power; how he should proceed with

with him afterwards, might be settle according to existing circumstances.

To effect this desideratum, therefor after calling a council amongst the tribe, t whom he had returned after his expulsio from the village, in order to consult upo the best method of putting the design o seizing the child into execution, Ambrose for weighty reasons, was assigned for th attempt, and received instructions accordingly; how well he succeeded in his commission has been shewn; all that now remained was, how to dispose of the prize which they had so villainously obtained for the future.

At the unwished-for sight of Cramptext and his friend, the conscience-stricken Frederick, who now recollected with increased terror the curses bestowed upon him by those who had seized him in the affray at St. Amands, felt a degree of horror which almost suspended his respiration. In vain did he now try to swallow the unsavoury portion dealt out to him,

in vain endeavour to hide his confusion; both were alike ineffectual; he shook in every limb, and at length no longer able to contain himself, burst into a flood of tears.

"Hey-day! what, piping again? what's the matter now, youngster?" growled Ambrose—"remember our compact—*quiet*," with a significant look, "is the word, or you may chance to dread the consequence."

Here the terrific knife arose to the affrighted imagination of the still-trembling boy, and although his heart was almost breaking with suppressed agony, he neither dared to give it vent, nor to utter a syllable in reply; whilst the supper passed over without any further notice being taken, either by the dreaded Cramptext, or any other of the party.

Again the persecuted boy began to breathe more freely; believing that he had not been recognized, he flattered himself that he was either not known by the parties,

r that the disagreeable circumstance
have been forgotten. Thus think-
is fears in some measure subsided,
again pressed his flinty couch with
rturbation than the events of the
g had foretold.

break again presented the same
f bustle and confusion which had
d the preceding morning. The
eparations were made for travelling,
same cant language again prevailed
t them; when the hasty meal con-
the party set out as before, leaving
ck again with the old man, the
nd the cripple.

ely had the wandering tribe once
fected their departure, than the
nd of conversation that had passed
before, again took place between
ining two, but in such indistinct
nat their hearer could make no-
it, though he listened much more
ely than he had hitherto done;
ugh their language was unintelli-

gible, he could mark their gestures, and felt great alarm when he observed the old man take a phial, containing a dark-coloured liquid, from a secret nook, and holding it up, make a sign to Ambrose to lay hold of him. The cripple immediately seized him by the arm, and retaining him in his powerful gripe, the old man approached with the phial, when they proceeded to lay bare the neck and arms of their passive victim, who seemed as if struck by the piercing eyes of the basilisk, and then to bathe every part that was outwardly visible with the liquid contained in the phial. This process almost instantaneously changed his clear transparent complexion into the murky olive characteristic of their tribe, whilst his fine dark eyes and richly-curling hair, that hung in ringlets over his forehead, completed the deception, and stamped him in appearance a beautiful gipsy.

The old man, pleased either with his own performance, or the object before him, regarded

regarded his young convert with a look of great complacency; and whilst he laid his hand on his head, in order to look more steadily in his face, he pronounced that, from the look of intelligence which beamed from his eyes, he would in time become an honour to their profession, and an acquisition to their society.

But here his majesty of the gipsies proved himself no physiognomist, or he would not have pronounced the features of Frederick Singleton indicative of aught within, save innocence, humanity, quick feeling, and even at his age possessing a high sense of honour. Could eyes like his, beaming tenderness and love, ever teem with the sly leer of low cunning? could lips that opened only to utter the accents of truth, ever be supposed fit vehicles for falsehood? or could those cheeks, whose vivid colouring even now peeped through the dark hue which covered them, suffer the mantling blush of shame to increase their carnation? Lovely boy, no; he was

no physiognomist that could pronounce the features which composed thy expressive countenance, cast in the disgraceful mould of villany; and no *Christian*, that could wish, by instilling the pernicious poison of evil counsel into thy bosom, to rob thee of thy sweets; for, as an elegant French author expresses it,

"Un enfant sans innocence est une fleur sans parfum."

CHAPTER XIV.

Behold our hero now enrolled, though not as a volunteer, in the olive-coloured corps of *riflemen*, and considered by the commander-in-chief as no small acquisition to the party; nothing therefore in his opinion now remained, but the task of initiating him into the duties of his profession. This was immediately commenced by teaching him the cant language, in which

which they generally expressed themselves towards each other; then followed *les petits ruses de guerre* which they were in the constant habit of employing against every other person; this the veteran, who was not altogether *au fait* of Cramptext's precise reasons for trepanning this child, would render him complete; and as he was equally ignorant in regard to his future disposal, he looked no further than his continuing a member of their society.

Whether it was owing to the difficulty this class of people find in rearing their progeny, through the unparalleled hardships which they frequently endure, or through the wilful neglect of their parents, is an enigma of which the solution is not easy; but it is certain that this kind of people rear but few children, and at this time there were not more than two or three belonging to the group in which chance had so blindly thrown Frederick. This was a circumstance that made the old man the more desirous of rendering

their young recruit fit for service, by leading him through a course of discipline as quick as possible; for he judged, and rightly too, that these young marauders, whether by their amusing tricks, tales of distress, or depredations, which, by their activity, they are better able to commit, frequently succeed beyond the elder part of the community. To have acquired one, therefore, so well gifted as Frederick, was regarded amongst them as a windfall of no common value; whilst, for their own sakes, they forbore to offer him any marks of personal violence, for they were not to learn that "a good countenance is a letter of recommendation," nor that children frequently obtain by their comeliness what might have been denied to their solicitations.

The time was now arrived when it was deemed necessary to place the young stranger upon duty. Frederick, therefore, began his gipsy career by having the honourable post of scout assigned him; when

when stationed just without the recess that sheltered the gang, he gave notice of the few stragglers whom chance conducted that way, whilst his predecessors were now sent out foraging with the rest. These boys, pleased with their new companion, had been very solicitous to obtain his regard, and for that purpose had exerted every nerve to obtain it. One was desirous of teaching him to dance the monkey hornpipe, whilst another volunteered to instruct him in singing a little Welsh ballad, stamping his feet and clapping his hands at the same time in unison with the tune, which he fancied he performed to admiration. Thus, if Frederick was not so accomplished as they wished him to be, it was no fault of his youthful companions.

Time, which seldom flies in vain, added to the habit of constantly beholding these uncouth people, had something abated that turbulence of grief which he had indulged at the beginning of his misfortunes;

tunes; and whilst it enabled him to submit to their customs with fewer feelings of disgust and irritability than he had at first experienced, it confirmed him in the repugnance he still felt in regard to complying with many of their given instructions.

At the mention of pilfering, which stood foremost in their catalogue of crimes, Frederick, who had been early taught to reverence the commands of his Creator by the good and conscientious Mr. Bonus, seemed to hear the prohibition of "*thou shalt not steal*," ringing loudly in his ears, whilst that of condescending to beg created no less symptoms of anger and abhorrence. Was he who had been accustomed, in a manner, to command those beneath him in point of situation, and at the same time to bestow with a liberal hand as far as his little means would allow—was he now to be forced to stoop and supplicate those very inferiors for an alms, which he had hitherto been accustomed to give?

his swelling heart answered,
dignant blush of wounded
on his cheek, and the tear
eling gushed from his eyes—
shall compel Frederick Sin-
to forget himself, as to be
er learning to beg or steal."
inflexibility of character,
ever evinced itself in Josiah
hen called upon to act in
nportance, was stamped on the
is son; and though he had
nself to submit to his persecu-
igs of no moment, he could not,
ne hazard of a severe flogging,
er punishments, which the vin-
ramptext, glad of an excuse for
g his vengeance on his innocent
be induced to do what he knew
wrong, both in a religious sense, as
as derogatory to the character of a
eman.

this way rolled the course of time,
th succeeding month, the young cap-
tive

tive complying with the requests of his jailors when they amounted only to trifles, but firmly resisting every thing which militated either against his honour or integrity, now and then making short excursions, guarded by the dreaded Ambrose, but mostly staying with the old man at home, when the hasty approach of winter obliged the gang to think of changing their quarters for others more secure and commodious.

In their present situation, which was held only as a resort for summer, principally on account of its retirement, they were much exposed to the weather; and though the butting rock jutted over the recess that screened them sufficiently to afford protection from a shower of rain, when aided by their tents, still it was not calculated for them to endure the rigours of the ensuing winter. Preparations therefore for an immediate removal were quickly put in practice, and if the spot to which they meant to retire was not so wildly romantic,

romantic, or so well concealed as their present abode, it was at least rendered more convenient by affording them a warm and permanent shelter.

Towards this retreat then the whole party now thought it necessary to set forward, Cramptext excepted, who had given it out that he should be absent for some months, much to the relief of Frederick, who, independently of the stripes with which this wretch sometimes belaboured him, could never look in his face without experiencing a tremor in every limb, and a secret dread of something still worse to come.

As they travelled onward, Frederick found himself gratified by contemplating the varied and imposing scenery which burst upon him at every step. Here a stupendous mountain reared its lofty head to the clouds, while from its sombre sides dashed the rapidly-falling cataract into a glassy river below, whose noiseless course wound sweetly through the picturesque and fertile

tile valley, far as the eye could reach. There the proud castle, towering high on a solid cliff, and frowning majestically even in ruins, met his sight; whilst at its base reposed the little peaceful village, whose white-washed cottages glistened in the beams of the setting sun, through the rich autumnal tints by which they were surrounded. Scarcely a spot did the hapless boy now traverse, but in some slight resemblance or other brought to his remembrance dear *Mytod Vale*, and with it a chain of recollections, where each endearing link twined closer round his heart, till a gush of silent tears eased his woe-fraught breast, and enabled him again to regain the mask of composure.

In this manner they pursued their way for several days, making no particular stay in the few villages through which they were necessitated to pass, and only halting by night, when they pitched their tents in the most obscure places, till, as the last day of their pilgrimage was closing in, they

they entered a narrow and apparently but little frequented lane, which wound round the foot of a very steep hill, whilst a thickly-planted wood sheltered it on the opposite side. In this confined pass they had not proceeded any great length of way, ere a large hollow in the side of the hill presented itself, in which were several wide grotto-like excavations, perhaps the ancient remains of some quarry, whose subterranean caverns, where arch interseeted arch, an interminable length, seemed calculated to afford shelter to an army and the whole tribe now halted opposite to this retreat.

The situation chosen by these wanderers for their winter retreat, they now rejoiced to find not only afforded shelter from the thick-coming storms without, but security within; for who would care to attempt such an abode, where the intruders might get entangled in a labyrinth from which it would not be easy to escape? yet was not so remotely stationed, but

they might have easy access to the villages or hamlets that lay contiguous, whenever choice or necessity induced any of the gang to approach them.

But that which was reckoned the greatest advantage by these people, yielded no pleasure to the poor lost Frederick; he only beheld in these dreary caverns of the earth, a dungeon which shut him out from all the world, and in the secluded situation, a farther remove from all he held dear in it. At the commencement of their route he had indulged a hope, that he might be enabled once more to obtain a sight of dear *Myfod Vale*, if only in perspective; but that hope had proved a forlorn one, and had died almost as soon as it was engendered; for he quickly understood, from the conversation of the group, which he was now able to understand, that before they could reach their new abode, they must be under the necessity of nearly crossing the principality.

Confined then in a sequestered and lonesome

lonesome nook, amidst the rocky and mountainous passes of North Wales, and suffered to associate only with a set of wretches, whose habitual cunning and watchfulness rendered it impossible for him either to escape, or in any way make the cruelty of his situation known, can it be wondered at, that the little fortitude which he had hitherto possessed should forsake him? Again he drooped, and the heavy and fixed eye became indicative of what passed within, whilst the mouth, parched with grief and agitation, refused to admit a sufficient degree of sustenance for support; a languor crept through his trembling frame, which ended in his becoming the victim of a slow, nervous fever.

In this state of painful existence, Frederick passed the winter months, during which he had scarcely stirred from the caverns, when the time not devoted to sleep had been chiefly passed in the society of the old man, women, and children.

From

From these individually he had nothing to complain of; they conducted themselves towards him in the same way they did to each other, that is to say, they let him alone. In this interval the want of something by way of employment, for insipid indeed is life, at whatever period of existence, without some commendable pursuit, had been heavily felt by the poor invalid, who had hitherto delighted in his studies at school, and had pursued them with equal avidity. Books, of course, it was impossible for him now to attain, and any athletic amusement, in the weak state in which he was, he was altogether unequal to; all therefore that remained for him by way of amusement, was to write in a small pocket-book, the gift of his uncle when he went first to St. Amands, and which, being of no value to any of the tribe, as they durst not dispose of it for fear of discovery, had been quietly left in his possession. In this valued gift then it was his only solace to insert the names,

and

and places of residence of his uncle, his father, and all whom he loved and remembered with regret, till the pencil, unfortunately in the present case, not being a charmed one, was soon worn out in this, to him, interesting service, when he was obliged to desist from his melancholy employment. But although the pencil had gradually disappeared, the precious book with its contents had not, and he still cherished it as a beloved memento next to his heart.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XV.

SPRING, in all his gay attire, was now hastily advancing to renovate drooping nature, by scattering blossoms as he passed, when the ears of the few inhabitants who were stationary in the caverns, were suddenly saluted by the sound of distant voices, which the breeze, at intervals, bore louder and deeper towards them.

Surprised at so unusual an incident, the whole party ran out in order to listen more attentively, when the sound appeared to approach rapidly nearer, and what was more, to issue from the lips of persons gaily laughing and talking together. At first it was supposed that something extraordinary had occurred to occasion the return of their own friends thus unexpectedly; but whence the noise and

and tumult, so contrary to their usual mode of conduct, and what could have happened thus to collect them all in a body? were questions that rapidly passed among them; whilst a few minutes sufficed to put an end to all conjecture on the subject, by displaying the gay streamers and scarlet coats of a number of soldiers, who came,

"With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth,"

within a few yards of their concealment. These, with a small number of recruits, had just crossed over from Ireland, and were now on their way to join the regiment into which they had been drafted for foreign service; when, in order to obtain a nearer cut to the little town where they hoped to be billetted for the night, they had been directed down this narrow lane, from whence, by crossing the open country, they might again attain the high road from which they had been led to deviate.

e sudden appearance of such unex-
l guests could not fail to throw the
party into great disorder, not being
) conjecture the motive for their visit;
t first they felt rather doubtful, as to
opriety of concealing themselves till
truders had passed by, but recollect-
hat some outward signs, even if
hemselves had remained unobserved,
have betrayed them, they deter-
l at once to banish fear by standing
ground.

the party advanced, the scouts began
their usual kind of yelping cry to
)n for a halfpenny, whilst the rest
: tribe, Frederick excepted, seemed
employed behind; but he, at the ap-
l of the strangers, had almost uncon-
ly rushed forward, as if actuated by
essed hope of delivery, till encoun-
the stern gaze of Ambrose, when
nfited, he again drew back, and fear-
shewing himself, retired despairingly
his sight.

The

The soldiers, on perceiving the gipsies in so sequestered a spot, drew up, and, as if with one accord, made a halt, in order to reconnoitre, when the superior in command, by way of entering upon a conversation with them, demanded if the path which they were then pursuing would conduct them to the place where they expected to abide for the night? Being answered in the affirmative, a further parley quickly ensued, when some of the poor fellows being thirsty with their march, demanded of them a draught of water. This request was willingly complied with, when, in order to have a double enjoyment of rest, and a refreshing beverage at the same time, many of the party threw themselves on the ground, mingling indiscriminately with the tattered group before them. In a few moments, as neither party stood much upon ceremony, the laugh and joke went round, whilst some of the females, who pretended to be gifted with the art of divination, offered to foretell their fu-

ture destiny, whether they would return from the wars, "head whole and heart whole," if they would assist the charm by crossing their hands with a trifle, whilst the men made themselves familiar with the new-comers, and shewed themselves equally expert in the art of extracting.

A large party of the soldiers had now completely surrounded Ambrose, some of them regarding him, from his miserable appearance, as a fit subject to crack their jokes upon, whilst others pestered him with questions as to how and where he became so maimed and disfigured in his person? questions which, for potent reasons, Ambrose did not think proper to answer, and easily passed off with a little of the gipsy slang, which was equally satisfactory.

Frederick, during the scene, had again crawled to the entrance of the cave, when he caught the attention of a mild, intelligent-looking young man, who appeared to regard his weak and emaciated form with a look that bespoke in him both sympathy

mpathy and compassion, and observir
e tear stealing silently down his chee
the disappointment of his new-rais
opes struck coldly on his heart, t
tranger inquired if he had long been ill
A single affirmative, uttered in a tr
mulous tone, was the only reply.
The pitying soldier then rummaged
his pockets, and collecting a few halfpenc
he presented them to Frederick, who
hastily put them back with one han
whilst with the other he grasped the har
of the stranger, at the same time lookir
earnestly in his face, as if he had som
thing to communicate, when the old ma
suddenly approaching, commanded hi
to fetch his pipe. The appeal which h
intended to have made was here broken
the words which he wished to have utte
ed now died upon his tongue, and fea
fully loosing the hand which he had s
eagerly seized, he retired silently into th
cavern.

Conduct so extraordinary as this er

gaged the attention of the young man, who continued to sit with his eye fixed upon the entrance where Frederick had disappeared, ruminating upon the circumstance, and watching for his return. In a few minutes the persecuted boy was again visible, bearing the dingy tobacco-pipe to its no less dingy owner, when, having delivered it, he again slowly crept towards the stranger, and carefully looking round, as if eager to avoid observation, he thrust a small piece of folded paper into his hand, and immediately disappeared.

The young soldier, however surprised by so singular a proceeding in the poor sickly-looking boy before him, possessed the presence of mind, as well as a sufficient degree of humanity, not to expose him by offering any comments on the transaction, or to suffer the paper, thus secretly confided to his care, let the contents be what they might, to be discovered: carefully then depositing it in his pocket, it rested there in perfect security, till

till time should give him an opportunity of perusing its contents.

Charles Cuthbert, the name by which the young soldier here mentioned was distinguished, was doomed very early in life to suffer persecution, and had thereby, as Sterne phrases it, learned mercy. His parents, whom passion, not prudence, had united, were both descendants of sinking families: the one nearly ruined by contending with the fast-clenched gripe of the law, the other overwhelmed by a tissue of calamities, which, by being unforeseen, could not be prevented. Charles was the first fruit of this ill-starred union, and until he was six years of age, the weight of misfortune, which seemed suspended over his head by heritage, trembled in the air, like the fatal sword over the head of the tyrant, every moment threatening his destruction, when, no longer able to hold its equilibrium, it fell, with its full force, and crushed him to the earth.

The authors of his birth, who, in the heyday of their youth, alive only to the present, and reckless of the future, thought it a fine trait of philosophy to set care and the advice of their friends at defiance, had long drooped under the horrors with which the phantom *Poverty* assailed them; and as theirs was not a match founded on the broad basis of esteem, which might have enabled them to stem the torrent of adversity by mutually supporting each other, it soon overwhelmed them, when discord stepped in to plunge them still deeper in misery by her lighted torch—a torch which separation alone could now extinguish.

Driven then from his home, and induced by a series of never-ending disputes and bitter revilings to turn his back upon a family he wanted means to support, poor Cuthbert, like many others in similar situations, had no better resource than a scarlet coat and a musket. These afforded him bread and employment, things

of

of no small consequence in the scale of existence; and as a kind of salvo for his wounded pride, he could boast of the loyalty he owed his sovereign, and the zeal with which he had stepped forth to offer his services, when, from the exigency of the times, they were the most needed.

The deserted wife, at first freed from the presence of her husband, deemed herself alike freed from the troubles and vexations which had beset her since her unfortunate marriage, and which she foolishly attributed to his mismanagement. But, alas! in this case the liberty which she so ardently coveted came unattended with its usual blessing, independence. Herself and children, for she had one still younger than Charles, were now to be supported by the labour of her own hands; and as industry had never been the forte of Mrs. Cuthbert, this she found exceedingly difficult to accomplish. Short allowance began to creep in, deprivation followed deprivation, and the consequence of want-

ng food was soon followed by that of vanting clothes; whilst the most valuable nd portable articles in her house soon ound their way to the pawnbrokers, from vhence they never returned, and were hus lost for ever. But why follow ruin tep by step, through the rapid move-nents by which she conducts her victims o destruction? why describe the path hat leads but to despair? Suffice it to ay, that young, handsome, her prospects n life all broken, her dearest ties dis-olved, an outcast from society, the un-ıappy victim of imprudence fell,

> "And like a lily drooping,
> She bow'd her head and died,"

ıo matter how, under the woes that op-ɔressed her.

From this period, Charles Cuthbert and ıis brother became, in every sense of the vord, *orphans*. Their father having been lrafted into a regiment destined for the East Indies, none knew, after a time, whether

whether he was alive or dead, for the that had hitherto bound him to his fa being so rudely snapped asunder, deemed no other of sufficient strengt attach him to any one in England; intelligence, therefore, had ever beer ceived to warrant his existence, an was generally believed by the few interested themselves in his fate, tha was no longer an inhabitant of this su nary world. Thus parentless, his sur ing children were left to God and wide world for protection.

Pity, which more or less actuates e generous bosom, and which forms an sential quality towards the true Chris character, at this touching period, was found wanting in the hearts of s amongst the branches of their moth family, who made an effort towards t support. But it was an effort only; t means could not keep pace with their nevolent designs; their inclinations v rendered abortive, and the poor child

after being buffetted about from one compassionating relative to another, as they each found them too great a burthen to support, were at length consigned to the only receptacle that could afford them shelter, viz. the Orphan Asylum.

Here, mingled indiscriminately with an hundred little suffering creatures as unfortunate as himself, poor Charles, who was just of an age to feel not only the deprivation of the parents he had so early lost, and whom he was continually calling to his remembrance, but the galling humiliation also to which he was exposed, seldom held up his head, and was never seen to smile; a gloomy pensiveness had taken possession of his countenance; and that brow, which at his tender age should have been fair and open, seemed already contracted by the unbending stamp of misery and care. Still the sorrowing boy did not complain: he knew complaint was useless; or if the griefs of his little heart had been too mighty

mighty for concealment, to whom could he have confided them, whilst he imagined himself standing alone in the world? what were relations or those denominated friends to him, he argued, that could thus consign his helpless infancy to a parish? Why, nothing; and all that remained for him to do was to nurse his griefs, and brood over them in silence.

For six years, the time stipulated for his becoming a free denizen of the world, he merely vegetated like a stinted shrub, half withered in its growth, for want of air and nourishment, when, according to the rules of the establishment, he was to be made over to whomsoever, for a paltry stipend, would take the care of him. But this, however politic the measure, did not seem a plan likely to succeed, in the present instance, no one seeming disposed to be troubled with so puny a boy; and for some time the future fate of Charles Cuthbert remained undetermined, when a butcher, tempted by the allowance, however small,

small, that was to accompany him, thought he could not be much hurt if he did take the skeleton of a thing, to help to drive up his fat cattle for the slaughter, and perform other menial offices, as occasion might require in the family.

This arrangement cut deeper, as his master the butcher would have said, through the heart of poor Charles than all the rest; for he had taught himself to look forward to his emancipation from the Asylum, with a degree of hope that the change, whatever it might be, must eventually be productive of something better; but, as he rested his eye on the brutal aspect of his future master, and listened to the loud dissonant tones of his voice, his heart sunk within him; and the cherub *hope*, which had hitherto flapped her expanded wings over him, now fled for ever.

To follow this poor and unfortunate boy through a series of hardships which he was still fated to endure, would be superfluous; it is sufficient to observe, that with the

ne hard blows and rough language wl
se received from his master, came fi
air, exercise, and good living—a remun
tion sufficient to compensate for the e
which assailed him; and that the pi
"skeleton of a boy" was soon lost i
tall, healthy, well-looking young man.

Still the situation of Charles Cuthl
was galling in the extreme. Once
twice, upon his first entrance into this
mily, proud of the little knowledge he l
acquired at the Asylum, he made an efl
to keep it up, by producing his stock
books, given him for that purpose, o
Sunday evening. But poor Charles's s
dies were quickly ended, for his mast
who had a natural antipathy to learni
particularly in a menial, said it served
no earthly good, only to make people l
lieve they were all upon an equality wi
each other; and that for his part, he chc
to know who was master in his house, a
who was servant; which was not alwa
the case where the one thought himself

wi

wise as the other, because he had learned to read; when seizing the said books, he sent them as an additional pile to augment his kitchen fire; thus depriving the poor fellow of the only thing that could have lightened the burthen under which he so heavily groaned.

Three more years moved heavily on, every hour tempting him to put an end to his slavery, by endeavouring to effect his escape, while he was as constantly held back from making the attempt by the fear of detection, when the tædium of his life was a little enlivened by the animating sounds of a drum and fife, which a gay recruiting party had introduced into the village. Although Charles had not been allowed to use his eyes at discretion, his dogmatical master could not prevent his making use of his ears, when the sprightly airs of the enlivening fife, to which he was in the habit of listening, roused a desire in his bosom to reap some of those laurels which he understood, by the florid speech of

of the serjeant, had been so frequently gathered by his countrymen in foreign lands. "Besides," he questioned within himself, "would it not be better for me to serve the king than the tyrant to whom I am now subject? His majesty would certainly be the better master of the two; and as to country," he added—

> "The universal sun
> Confines not to one land his blessed beams,
> Nor is man rooted like a tree, whose seed
> The winds or some ungenial soil have cast
> There where it cannot prosper."

All therefore was alike to him in his isolated state; *he* was a "citizen of the world," and must therefore endeavour to make the best of his way through it.

In this frame of mind, Charles soon argued himself into a determination of mounting a cockade, and decamping with the party when they should be ready to depart. This he accomplished as secretly as possible, in order to avoid the lynx-eye of suspicion; and ere his master had well missed

missed him, the object of his vengeance was far away, safe alike from his search and meditated acts of violence.

At the present period, Charles Cuthbert had been some time in the army; and although he had made his first campaign in a foreign country, and suffered, in common with many others, innumerable hardships, he still congratulated himself on the exchange he had effected, and never once felt a wish to return to the post from which he had so adroitly escaped. Here, in spite of hard duty and strict subordination, from which there was no appeal, he still found many leisure hours, which he devoted to the cultivation of his mind; and as nature had gifted him with a feeling and generous heart, rendered still more tender by the persecution he had undergone, a conquered enemy had never occasion to complain of experiencing unnecessary rigour at his hands; nor an object of distress came under his eye, without his affording them relief and consolation.

It was no wonder then, with a heart and disposition so fraught with the milk of human kindness, that Charles Cuthbert should so instantaneously distinguish the speaking anguish portrayed in the countenance of Frederick Singleton, and so immediately comply with the means which he guessed were most likely to procure him relief; and while he pocketed the scrap of paper so secretly conveyed to him, and buckled on his knapsack, in order to pursue his journey, he breathed a fervent wish that it might be in his power, though how he knew not, to procure him that consolation which the poor invalid seemed so evidently to require.

END OF VOL. I.

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FEARS AND CARES.

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FEARS AND CARES.

CHAPTER I.

AMONGST the race of human beings, is there one that has not, at some period or other of their lives, experienced that sickness of the heart which arises from hope deferred—

> "Delusive Hope, that points to distant good,
> To good that mocks approach"—

and yet who can prevail upon himself to banish the sweet deluder from his bosom? Who but she, the only blessing left for man amidst innumerable ills, will smooth his passage to the tomb, whilst she com-

forts the departing saint with whispers of a blessed immortality beyond it?

This sickness of the heart, so inseparable from suffering humanity, for a long time pervaded the bosom of sir Hugh Singleton, threatening the total derangement of his nervous system. Week had succeeded week, and month rolled over month, but no tidings of the lost sheep had yet reached his ears; and he, in concert with the rest of the family, had almost given up the hope of ever beholding Frederick again. The blow which she received, in being thus unaccountably deprived of her son, struck heavily on the heart of Mrs. Singleton; but in time she learned to console herself, and endeavoured to console her husband also, by some of her trite observations.—"Why should we continue to grieve?" added she—"when a thing is done, it cannot be undone,'—and it is a folly to meet misfortune half-way—beside, who knows what luck we may have in discovering him after all, for 'while there is life,

life, there is hope;' and nothing shall persuade me that he is dead; and if we can but once have him again, 'safe bind safe find,' shall in future be my motto."

These harangues, to quote another phrase of Mrs. Singleton's, "went in at one ear and out of the other," without making the wished-for impression on Josiah, whose understanding was rather of too solid a nature to be convinced by such frivolous arguments. He had been much shocked by the late occurrence, and deeply lamented the loss of his son, on more accounts than one—first, as it regarded his own paternal feelings; for unnatural indeed must that parent be who is callous to the welfare of his own offspring; and secondly, as to the influence which Frederick possessed over the affections of his uncle, whose fortune he had no doubt, and what still weighed heavier in the scale of worldly wisdom, the *title* also, would in time have devolved upon him. This, as he had now an increase of family to share his own substance,

independent of the child in question, he thought a very desirable object to contemplate in perspective; and he therefore doubly regretted the melancholy catastrophe, which, by depriving him of his son, might, by some fortuitous event—for who could say that his brother, sir Hugh, being bereft of his greatest solace, in losing Frederick, might not be tempted to marry? and in that case *his* family would not only be deprived of a large accession of wealth, but would experience a decrease of consequence also.

These melancholy reflections, like the triste whisperings of some evil genii, troubled the repose of Josiah Singleton night and day; and he left no means unessayed to remove them, by using every effort in his power for the restoration of his son. The country was immediately scoured for miles, every inquiry set on foot, that was at all likely to elucidate the mysterious transaction, and an ample reward offered to whomsoever should find and bring back

back the wanderer; but hitherto without effect: and all that now remained for the brothers, was to offer to each other that consolation of which they both stood in need.

In this sombre frame of mind, sir Hugh Singleton found it impossible to apply to any of his favourite pursuits. His garden lay neglected, for that reminded him too forcibly of the lively activity of his regretted nephew, who, when at home, was his constant attendant in this department; it therefore now possessed no attractions for the sorrowing baronet. Reading fatigued him; besides, he frequently found it difficult to appreciate the contents of the volume before him, when his imagination was wandering far away upon different subjects; and as to his darling *antiquities*, he felt as if he should loathe the sight of a Roman vase, and hate the very name of *Herculaneum*, as long as he lived.

To what resources then could a mind, thus at war with itself, fly, in order to ob-

tain relief from the demon *ennui*, which now so forcibly possessed it? what, but to ramble amidst scenes of desolation, that were in unison with the discord that reigned within? and the falling ruins of the old castle, where he could listen to the wind as it moaned at intervals through the interstices created by the creeping inroads of time, and fancy it sympathized in his grief, by yielding him sigh for sigh, could alone furnish him consolation. Here, after wandering one day as usual, amongst its tottering battlements, musing upon the untoward circumstance that had thus given a different colouring to every thing around him, chance conducted him into the dilapidated apartment, where stood the worm-eaten trunk, whose lid, still open as he himself had left it, reminded him of the long-forgotten manuscript which he had drawn from its dusty concealment.

The mind of sir Hugh Singleton having long been attuned to woe, he felt that he could now doubly sympathize with every child

child of misfortune that claimed his pity; and as he cast his eyes round the humid walls of this long-forsaken abode, he could not help apostrophizing aloud its former imaginary possessor.—"Poor sufferer!" he exclaimed, "thy woes were doubtless much more poignant than mine; but however deeply they were inflicted, thy pure spirit, breaking its earthly thraldom, hath fled beyond them; nor can it now avail thee to know that there is a heart, which, feeling for thy calamities, can shed the tear of commiseration over thy memory."

With a mind fully occupied by the miseries of the supposed recluse, sir Hugh now left the ruins, and retraced his steps to the Vale, when, the library being closed in for the night, it occurred to him that something might be gathered from the manuscript in his possession, respecting a being whom he could not persuade himself but must have existed in the situation from whence he had taken it; and as he was now freed from interruption, he

thought it a fit opportunity for gratifying his curiosity respecting the marvellous, by perusing the scroll in question.

Drawing his chair therefore nearer the fire, and trimming his lamp, that no impediment might intervene to prevent deciphering characters traced by fingers long since fallen to decay, unless, like the *hand* of the beautiful Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, lately exposed in a shop-window in Bath, they had been preserved as a disgusting memento, or a convincing proof of the folly of human vanity, in endeavouring to prevail over, or prevent, the devastations of time. It might also, he reflected, have been dictated by a heart replete with the fire of genius and of truth, though for ages frozen by the icy touch of death: thus thinking, sir Hugh produced the mouldering manuscript, and proceeded to his task.

In many places, as might be expected, the writing was much defaced, whilst in others fragments had disappeared from the tattered parchment, preventing in many places

places the sense and spirit of the composition from being rightly understood: however, after conning it over, and patching the mutilated fragments as well as he could together, the following appeared to be the substance of the ancient "*Legend*" before him:—

"Quick wav'd the trees in the evening breeze,
The breeze that blew so chill;
Dark was the west, as the sun sunk to rest
Behind the distant hill.

"Quick wav'd the trees in the evening breeze,
The breeze that blew so cold;
When it was late, at the high castle gate,
A man knock'd loud and bold.

"Quick wav'd the trees in the evening breeze,
The breeze that blew so stout;
Sad was the tale, which the stranger so pale
Was spreading round about.

"How that a knight, all in armour so bright,
Adown the vale laid low;
Blood, from a wound, was fast flowing around,
But who had dealt the blow?

"Back from the war, where he'd wander'd afar,
Perhaps his love to greet;
The knight had come back, but, alas! and alack!
A direful fate to meet!

"Quick wav'd the trees in the evening breeze,
The breeze that hollow blew;
Cold ran the blood of the baron Lerhuyd
At what the *pale man* knew.

'Succour I claim, in great Jehovah's name,
(A name which sinners dread):
List to my tale, and come down in the vale,
With me to shroud the dead!'

"Round in amaze, all the vassals now gaze,
Whilst wonder seal'd each tongue,
And in their ears, appall'd by their fears,
The pale man's words still rung.

"Loud through the hall, the baron wildly call,
To all who silent stand—
'Quick, from my gate, all my vassals who wait,
Drive that man, I command.

'False is his tale, for adown in the vale,
Low lays no noble knight;
Keep him aloof, for from under this roof
I go but with daylight.'

"Sternly stood forth, as a spectre of wrath,
The man of pallid hue;
And on the lord who had made this award,
A piercing look he threw.

"The hall 'gan shake, whilst the vassals all quake,
With awe and secret dread,
While not a word in th' assembly was heard;
At length the *pale man* said—

"Follow

'Follow me straight, for no longer I'll wait,
Thou baron once so bold;
What canst thou fear? dost think *treachery* near
From one that's dead and cold?

'Closed are these eyes, on the cold ground he lies,
Who once with vigour blest,
Thee might have aw'd, by the strength of his sword,
And bow'd thy haughty crest!

'Silent that tongue where persuasion once hung,
To charm each female ear;
Still is that heart, which did never yet start
From an impulse of fear!

'Perish'd that hand, which once wav'd command,
In battle bold as thine;
Seal'd is his doom, and to the silent tomb
His cold corse we'll consign.'

"Dark was the night, for the moon hid her light,
And chill the breeze still blew,
When o'er the waste, the baron wildly haste
With him of pallid hue.

"O'er hill, o'er dale, over mountain and vale,
Now high, now low they go;
O'er wood, o'er dell, over briar and fell,
They hurry to and fro.

"O'er turf, o'er stone, but repose found they none,
Till they reach a fearful height;
Whence to look round, would the senses astound
Of many a timid wight.

" Quick pass'd the cloud, which the pale moon enshroud,
Hiding her partial light,
Far to the north, whilst she sweetly shone forth,
In all her lustre bright.

" Struck to the heart, the baron wildly start
At that which met his view;
For by his side, cloth'd in warrior's pride,
Stood him of pallid hue.

" Shaking with fright at so awful a sight,
His visage low now hung,
While from his brow drops of agony flow,
And terror seal'd his tongue.

" Hollow the groan, and terrific the tone,
Which met his startled ear,
And, like a dart, now struck home to his heart,
Appall'd by guilty fear.

' *Traitor* accurst!—of false brothers the worst,
Prepare to meet thy doom,
From him thy hate, and treachery's dark fate,
Sent to the mouldering tomb!

' Blighted my fame, and slandered my name,
By thee long unreprov'd,
Exil'd from home, I a wanderer roam,
Unpitied and unlov'd.

' Forc'd to depart, from the bride of my heart,
With sorrow deep I go;
Whilst to your care, void of doubt, void of fear,
I trust my secret woe.

' *Tyrant*

'*Tyrant* depriv'd!—by thee I'm bereav'd
Of all that sweeten'd life,
My honour bright (soul of many knight),
And eke my loving wife!

'Now all is hush'd, with repeated wrongs crush'd,
Thy brother meets a tomb;
But loud and high, stern justice now cry,
The murd'rer waits his doom!'

"As if with fright, the moon now hides her light,
And loud the blast still blew,
Whilst from a cloud issued thund'rings loud,
With flash of sickly hue.

"Struck to the ground, fill'd with horror profound,
The sinner low is laid;
With humble tone, and contrition's deep moan,
To invoke Heaven's aid.

"Can one immers'd in guilt, deep and accurst,
As that which stains his hand,
E'er hope to prove signs of celestial love
From Heaven's high command?

"No!—from the rock, with a terrible shock,
Headlong the culprit's hurl'd,
To meet that fate which stern justice, though late,
Fix'd in another world!

"Now in the waste, as, with terrific haste,
The traveller passes by,
His cold corse gleams in the sickly moonbeams,
Whilst shrieks the raven high.

"And

" And in the vale, when at evening pale,
The wanderer onward goes ;
He starts with fright at the terrific sight,
While keen the breeze still blows ! E. C."

CHAPTER II.

Sir Hugh Singleton, like many others whose minds, through an excess of sensibility, are wound up to a romantic pitch of enthusiasm, and who expect to meet substances, where there is scarcely a groundwork even for shadows, was perhaps a little disappointed at the small degree of satisfaction he had been able to obtain from the perusal of this mouldering fragment of antiquity. It certainly appeared, he thought within himself, to describe some dark and terrible deed that had been committed, perhaps by some former possessor of that very castle; but whether so in reality, or only a fiction;

a fiction of the poet's brain, he was obliged to leave; nor could he gather ought beside, save that those apartments must have been once inhabited by beings, who, like the rest of their fellow-creatures, had eat and drank, walked and slept, lived and died; thus passing silently away like a summer cloud, which leaves not a trace behind to mark its progress.

In the way lately described, sir Hugh continued to vegetate; for living it could scarcely be called, where a man, although he possesses a multiplicity of the good things of this life, can find nothing amongst them all to afford him any portion of enjoyment: sitting therefore in his usual listless manner rather late one evening, he was startled by the entrance of a servant, to say that a young soldier, apparently on march, wished to have the honour of talking with him.

"A soldier, and with me!" demanded Hugh; "what can his business be with me?—it must surely be some mistake; I am

am not in the commission for the peace, tell him, and can therefore be of no use to him."

"He wishes to see your honour on some particular account, I understood," replied the servant, "though what it was he did not say."

"I have no authority to do any thing for him," continued the baronet, hesitatingly, from his dislike to see strangers, "and therefore it is of no use to admit him; besides, he can have no particular business with me."

"He seems very desirous of seeing your honour," added the servant, as if wishing to carry his point, "and is a very well-spoken young man."

"Well, tell him to send in his business."

The servant now left the room with a half-satisfied air, and quickly returned, bringing in a small piece of crumpled, dirty-looking paper, bearing the superscription of "Sir Hugh Singleton, Myfod Vale," whilst he added, that the young soldier could

could have wished to have delivered it himself, as he could then have told him from whom he received it.

How a small piece of paper, simply bearing his address, could be a matter of interest or importance to himself, sir Hugh was at a loss to conjecture, and believing the stranger was manœuvring a little, in order to obtain a trifle to help him on his march, he desired the servant, to avoid further trouble, to give him half-a-crown, and with it his dismissal.

But Charles Cuthbert was not so easily got rid of—he had not remarked the pallid cheek, sunken eye, and nervous tremor creeping through the shattered frame of Frederick Singleton, to be so repulsed, when he had once stepped forward in the cause of affliction. He was sure that, although the poor boy, let him be who he would, had been able to give him this scrap of paper only, there was more in it than met the eye; and he determined therefore to deliver it, and describe the writer accordingly.

ingly. Thanking the servant therefore, at the same time that he declined his bounty, he again urged his demand of being permitted to speak with sir Hugh Singleton.

Again the footman was prevailed upon to retrace his steps into the parlour, in order to bear the respectful message dictated by the young soldier, when sir Hugh, although still feeling a repugnance to admit intruders, incapable of framing a plausible denial, desired he might be admitted.

The servant, who had felt rather interested by the appearance of the young man, as well as the earnestness with which he pleaded his cause, was rejoiced to be the bearer of the welcome intelligence of his admittance; telling Cuthbert therefore to follow, he was not long in conducting him to the presence of his master.

Cuthbert, on being introduced to the baronet, and the servant withdrawn, modestly began by making an apology for conduct which must appear enigmatical,

and

and which required some little elucidation; "but as the paper which he had taken the liberty to send in to his honour had been given him," he said, "under particular circumstances, by an object that had strongly excited his pity, he could not refuse to act as he had done."

Sir Hugh desired he would proceed.

The young soldier then continued to detail the accidental circumstance of himself and his companions halting in the gipsies vicinity; of his attention being arrested while there by a poor, sickly-looking, emaciated boy, whose condition he had endeavoured to ameliorate by offering him the few halfpence in his pocket, but which he had refused. He then proceeded to relate how, at parting, he had confided to his care, with signs of secrecy, that same scrap of paper, which, though it had cost him an additional mile or two to a tedious day's march, he had determined on delivering himself; hoping, at the same time, that it might

might in one way or other benefit its pitiable writer.

Long before this detail drew to a conclusion, a light had flashed through the harassed mind of sir Hugh, which led him to believe that the unfortunate boy so feelingly described by the soldier must have been his darling Frederick, else why address him? Yet, although trembling with delight at one moment to think he was in existence, and shaking with apprehension for fear of being deceived the next, so accustomed had he been to conceal his feelings, he betrayed not a particle of what was passing within, but continued, with a calm voice, to make every inquiry that was likely to ascertain the truth of his conjectures.

Satisfied at length that the boy in question could be no other than his beloved nephew, who had been thus described as residing in this den of misery, though how the dear unhappy child could have been decoyed

decoyed there, was not easy to conjecture, sir Hugh now exacted every particular as to the distance and situation of this cavern, when, being satisfied on this head, he proceeded to commend the humanity of the young soldier, that could thus lead him to volunteer in the service of suffering innocence; and with a promise that his interference, with regard to the individual in question, should not be in vain, he dismissed him with a reward suitable to the benevolence of the action.

No sooner had Charles Cuthbert turned his back, in order to pursue the route where glory called him, than sir Hugh Singleton dispatched an express with the agreeable tidings he had received to the villa; but as no felicity is perfect this side heaven, so his was damped by the situation to which the object of their regret was said to be reduced. Still the having received intelligence of him at all, was matter sufficient for the groundwork of rejoicing; and when Josiah proclaimed the

the discovery of his son, the animating sound of "Frederick is found! Frederick is found!" was reiterated like a watchword from one to another throughout the family.

Quick as a pair of sleek black horses, when harnessed to a plain brown travelling chariot, could convey them, Mr. and Mrs. Singleton were brought to the Vale; where, after the first joyful greetings had passed between them, and a further explanation of the event ensued, a consultation was held as to the best and most expeditious method of proceeding, in order to regain and bring back the fugitive; when each of the brothers seeming desirous of acting the messenger for that purpose, it was at length agreed that both should immediately undertake the journey.

When Phœbus the next morning had harnessed his golden steeds, and unbarred the rosy portals of the east, ready to commence his brilliant journey ere he could repose in Thetis' lap, so soon were the sleek steeds of Josiah Singleton again in motion

and ere Sol had travelled half his course, they had conducted their master many miles from home. But as the road they had still to pass seemed to offer many irregularities, they found it but little calculated for a carriage; it was therefore quickly agreed to leave the vehicle, horses, and servants behind, at a small house denominated a Welsh inn, where they had picked up something by way of apology for a dinner, and then proceed with hired horses by themselves.

These animals, become sure-footed from the constant habit of traversing these intricate passes, bore their riders safely along, through many a rugged path, over mountain's brow and craggy summit; whilst every feature of the imposing scene struck upon the imagination of sir Hugh, as strictly corresponding with the description given him by Cuthbert, whilst it convinced him that he was pursuing the path that would eventually lead him to the wished-for spot.

In

In this way they continued to move forward, though not at a very quick rate, until the twilight shades of evening surprised them by their approach, and induced them to recollect the necessity of looking out for a habitation where they might obtain shelter for the night. The road which they were now pursuing lay over a kind of wild and dreary heath, without much apparent track that could lead to the desired dwelling; and although nothing presented itself to impede their view in every direction, no vestige of a human habitation met their eye, save a small hamlet scattered round its little Gothic church, in a valley far below them, and at too considerable a distance for them to have reached that night, had they even been conversant in the approach.

After debating then a few minutes on the disagreeable dilemma to which they were reduced, they thought it most advisable to continue their path in a straightforward direction, in order to reach the outskirts

outskirts of the heath before it became too dark for them to distinguish objects, when they might be able to light upon some friendly lane that would conduct them to the object of their solicitude. Thus agreeing, they put their horses into as brisk a trot as the nature of the ground over which they were passing would allow; but even then they were enabled to make but a small progress. The farther the travellers advanced, the more difficult became their route. Rugged and misshapen masses of stone were every moment peeping up from the grass, which partially hid them at a distance, but which, on a nearer approach, became stumbling-blocks in their way, and obliged them to move with the greatest degree of caution.

Ebon Night was now rapidly succeeding the last glow of evening, and had already unfolded her black banner, destined to envelop the world, when our travellers, alarmed at the unusual circumstance of

being obliged to spend the night in the midst of a wide unsheltered heath, had just drawn their horses together, in order to consult upon their present dilemma, and the best mode of escaping it, when they were suddenly startled by the sound of voices issuing from two tall dark-looking objects, which had sprung up immediately beside them.

Not a vestige of a human being had crossed their sight since traversing this trackless waste; from whence then could these beings spring? Were they spirits of the air who had hitherto held themselves invisible, or inhabitants of earth's dull mound, that had thus broken in upon the stillness of night, to appal the senses of their hearers? Words of a singular import now swelled on the breeze, as these beings flitted across them, and seemed to convey to the astonished ears of sir Hugh a repetition of his own name, coupled with a sentence of portentous meaning. Struck with

with so extraordinary an occurrence, the brothers, instead of exerting themselves to ascertain who it was that could thus

"Syllable men's names,"

remained nearly motionless, till the voices died away, and the shadows of night hid the speakers from their view.

"Who could those mysterious beings allude to?" was a question which the brothers, when a little recovered, put to each other, "when they repeated such names, since it must have been impossible they could have perceived us, and more than impossible, if the sense admitted of a superlative degree, that any body being there could have recognized the person of sir Hugh Singleton, seated on the back of a shabby Welsh poney, in the middle of a wide uncultivated heath on the borders of Flintshire?—'Could the words thus mysteriously uttered," they went on to inquire, "be meant as a threat, or intended as a warning against some threatened evil, that

was to follow in this barbarous place?" In either case it was but of little service in their present uncomfortable situation; means of defence had they none, save their natural bodily strength; their only means of safety therefore lay in flight, and unless they could reach some place of concealment for the night, they had but little prospect of escape from the dangers by which they appeared to be menaced.

Recovering in some degree from the panic which had seized them, they again put their steeds in motion, and feeling their way as cautiously as possible, the sure-footed animals brought them at length to the boundary of the heath; this was a point they had long desired, as they imagined that some outlet must be quickly discovered; turning their horses heads, therefore, and giving them the reins, the sagacious little animals continued to wind along the fence which had obstructed their progress, till by a sudden turning, and the aid of a few stars which twinkled forth to light them

them on their way, sir Hugh perceived that they had entered a close narrow lane, which, from its having the appearance of being somewhat frequented, would, they trusted, conduct them to the object of their present pursuit.

CHAPTER III.

Cynthia, who had hitherto calmly reposed on the bosom of night, now beautifully irradiated the surrounding clouds with a silvery lustre, that foretold her speedy appearance; and in a few minutes she shone forth in all her chastened splendour.

By the brilliant light of this lovely planet, our travellers were now enabled to distinguish, with greater precision, the situation into which chance and their four-footed companions had thus conducted them. The lane which they had just entered,

tered, they could now discover was dark, winding, and narrow, more resembling a pass for cattle, than a beaten track which was likely to conduct them to any habitable spot—"Wherefore then pursue it?" they questioned. But to retreat was now as bad as to advance, and having only a choice of evils, they thought it best to proceed. In the way before them there existed a possibility of meeting the assistance they sought; while danger and disappointment certainly awaited them in the rear.

All now was solemn stillness. The moon rose majestically through the etherial vault of heaven, without a cloud to obscure her brightness, shedding, as she passed, her mild splendour upon every object below. Not a sound was heard to disturb the general silence, save the soft rustling of the breeze as it played at intervals through the leafy branches of the tall trees, which overshadowed them as they passed, or the wild note of the solemn night-bird,

when

when he greeted his companions in the distant grove. A scene so soft, so silent, and in many parts far as the eye could ken, so wild, conspired to diffuse a pleasing melancholy around. The mind of sir Hugh felt its full influence; and he continued to move forward wrapped in deep meditation, unmindful of the cursory remarks of his brother, till an object sufficiently striking to arrest his attention roused him from his fictitious wanderings to examine the subject before him.

What had now so forcibly struck the attention of sir Hugh, appeared to be the ruins of a castle, or some equally magnificent Gothic structure, in many places gone to decay. Upon the parts immediately facing them, as they made a sudden turn in the road, the moon played with a steady lustre, thereby placing them in a strong light, whilst the distance beyond was, now here, now there, broken in different masses, or thrown into impenetrable shadow. For several minutes they continued, with fix-

ed attention, to regard the object before them, in order to discover if there were any signs of its being inhabited, as well as to admire its beauty; but being unable to determine, they ventured to approach still nearer, to see if any shelter could be obtained for themselves and steeds for the remainder of the night, as both they and their riders began to require rest. Cautiously therefore approaching what they conceived to be a ruined and neglected pile, they discerned several inlets, in the shape of dilapidated arches, sufficiently capacious to admit not only themselves, but also their horses; and into which, seeing nothing to oppose them, they boldly entered. Here, by the light of the moon, they contrived to fasten their steeds to some of the broken projections within; and not caring to explore the depth which appeared in shadow beyond their present position, they threw themselves on the soft grass, which invitingly beckoned to repose, when, overcome by anxiety and fatigue, they

they were quickly lost in the forgetfulness of sleep.

The sun was riding high in the heavens, ere the travellers awoke from the heavy slumber that had seized them, when they found it difficult to recollect precisely the events of the preceding day, or to ascertain exactly the spot where fortune had bestowed them. Soon, however, their ideas became distinct, recollection returned, and informed them they had entered, the preceding evening, what they supposed to be a ruin, which they now determined to reconnoitre before they departed, with a view of offering an apology to the inhabitants, if there were any, for having taken possession of their property during the night. For this purpose then the brothers quitted their concealment, and prepared to explore the precincts beyond: but what was the surprise of both, upon emerging into the open air, to discover that what, under the influence of a bewildered imagination, aided by the shades of

night, had appeared a stately ruin, was nothing more than the rocky side of a stupendous hill, exhibiting several natural cavities, and, in short, the identical place to which they had been directed in their search after Frederick.

Happy in the discovery, scarcely a moment was allowed to elapse, ere the brothers proceeded to demand the young captive. But some address they recollected was necessary, lest by their precipitancy they might put the miscreants who detained him upon their guard, and by so doing mar their own intention. Quietly, therefore, and with the assumed appearance of unconcern, they proceeded to enter the caverns as they occurred, every moment expecting to meet the object of their solicitude; but all were tenantless hitherto, not even bearing the marks of recent habitation. At length one deeper in the interior of the earth, and something larger than the rest, shewed some signs of having been lately occupied. Here the scattered

tered remains of provisions, a few dying embers, and deserted beds of straw, were visible; but the birds themselves were flown, and nothing of sufficient consequence remained to indicate a likelihood of their return.

Disappointment and dismay now sat upon the countenance of each as they gazed around, whilst they felt but too forcibly the certainty of having arrived too late, to effect the rescue of the unfortunate Frederick, who, from this protracted absence, was fated still to remain in the pangs of these merciless wretches, who had decoyed him from his home, and who, they had no doubt, would put in practice every inventive cruelty to make him answer the end for which he was detained amongst them. It was now evident, from the appearance of the cave, that its inhabitants had but recently made their exit; but to pursue them in a strange country, where every intricacy and byepath were equally unknown, was next to impossible;

the brothers therefore could only gaze at each other in silent consternation, unable to propose any feasible plan of procedure.

It occurred at length to Mr. Singleton, that no good could be produced by remaining there, and that it was only a waste of time, which might be better employed elsewhere; and in consequence they turned to quit the cavern, when sir Hugh accidentally struck his foot against something concealed in the litter before him. Curiosity whispered him to leave nothing unsearched; he was therefore induced to pick it up, when upon examination he discovered the identical pocketbook which he himself had presented to his nephew, and in which Frederick had so often delighted to mingle, with his own, *names* dearest to his heart.

Here then existed a positive proof that the dear lost boy, whom they so earnestly sought, had been an inhabitant of these horrible caverns; and that in all probability he still continued a prisoner to the daring

daring tribe who had so iniquitously betrayed him. But actions, prompt and decisive actions, rather than lamentations, were now necessary; and with resolutions to put every effort in force, for the purpose of retrieving their lost time, the brothers quitted the dreary spot, and again set forward on their journey.

Sir Hugh, and the no less anxious Josiah, had indeed been too late to succeed in their endeavours for liberating Frederick. A few hours sooner, and they would have encountered the whole gang, equipped as they were for their march towards summer quarters; but besides being too late, they had unluckily taken a circuitous route, which prevented them from meeting the party issuing from one end of this solitary lane, whilst they entered at the other. Thus does chance appear to sport with the actions of men; and when they think themselves the most secure in attaining the height of their wishes, delight,

to

to shew them the instability of their power by frustrating them.

Sir Hugh now believed the most effectual method of accomplishing their purpose of recovering Frederick, would be to issue warrants throughout the country for apprehending any one who might come under the description of the vagrant act; this scheme was seconded by Josiah, and agreed to be put in practice as soon as they arrived at Myfod Vale. Here, however, the travellers had but just alighted on their return from their unprofitable excursion, ere their attention was called to two men of rather a shabby exterior, who demanded to speak with the master of the mansion, when sir Hugh, as eager now to receive strangers, who he flattered himself might be the bearers of welcome intelligence, as he was before desirous to avoid them, gave orders for their instant admittance.

With his long, straight, dark hair, parted smoothly on the forehead, whilst a rusty

suit

suit of black shaded his recreant limbs, stood Cramptext and one of his followers before them. He, in company with this partner in iniquity, had quitted the gipsies a few hours before they commenced their route, and it was no other than these two, who, by their suddenly emerging from a chasm in the earth, where, shunning the glare of day, they had lain concealed till darkness should prevent the road they took from being discovered, that had startled and alarmed the travellers, by hearing the name of *Singleton* coupled with certain execrations, indicative of their present designs, whilst they commenced their progress towards Myfod Vale.

The avowed purport of Cramptext's daring visit to sir Hugh Singleton, was to obtain the reward offered by that gentleman for the discovery of Frederick, by pretending that he had lately met with a youth answering the description given of him, in his perambulations, to which his ordinary avocations, as an humble preacher

of

of the gospel, had called him. This scheme he had put in practice without the knowledge of Ambrose, who he believed had stolen the child at his instigation; and having glutted his revenge by thus far punishing the young offender, who had dared to raise a hand in derision of him, he now meant to enjoy the reward for delivering him up, could he but succeed in his plan, when, by secretly decamping to a distant part of the country, he might defraud his companions of the reward which they would have demanded, had they been acquainted with his intentions.

The wily Cramptext, with every plausibility of speech, now endeavoured to impress his tale on the minds of his auditors, who, eager for the solution of the mystery which still hung over their lost Frederick, felt inclined to give him every possible credit on the subject. But however the brothers might seem disposed towards believing the tale he had invented, nothing short of the actual deliverance of the subject of it into

into their hands, could prevail upon them to yield the proffered reward. This the sycophant was not exactly prepared for; he had weakly flattered himself that, prompted by joy, on learning the existence of his nephew, sir Hugh would have immediately produced the destined, the proffered reward. But for once he had reckoned without his host; for being already aware of the deception which might be practised against them, both the brothers determined to ascertain the place of his present concealment, before they lost sight of their visitor.

Cramptext, rather alarmed at the turn things appeared to be taking, now found that he had gone too far to recede without good management, as he had no intention of betraying his breach of faith to the gipsies; he proceeded therefore in a humble tone, whilst a sinister expression lurked in his downcast eye, which ever refused to encounter the open regards of those with whom he conversed, to promise that within a certain

deavour at an escape; muttering therefore protestations of innocence, ignorance, &c. he kept retreating towards the door, which he observed invitingly open, and which could he but have gained, he would have trusted to his heels for security. But in design he was frustrated by the observing Josiah, who, coolly advancing in the position, turned the key upon him; and whilst depositing it in his own pocket, desired him to be composed, as no farther constraint was intended than that which he could easily shake off, if he was, as he affirmed himself to be, indeed innocent of any guilty transaction.

Mr. Singleton then proceeded to offer him his choice, either to prove himself innocent of the suspicion entertained against him, of having trepanned the heir of sir Hugh Singleton, by directly leading the way to where he knew the young gentleman was concealed, or of making an immediate visit to the *county jail.*

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

CRAMPTEXT, who, from his youth upward, had entertained a certain antipathy to the very name of jail, now, like Acres, began to feel his courage oozing away at the bare mention of such a thing, and rather than see even the outside of its terrific walls, would have consented to any sacrifice in his power. With as great a degree of confidence, therefore, as he was able to assume, he immediately offered to conduct the gentlemen to the spot where he knew Frederick was to be found; secretly hoping, at the same time, that some means of escape might be found to screen him from the evils which threatened. But if his evil genius prevailed, and the worst came to the worst, he argued, so as his duplicity must be exposed, that as he had been

been fool enough to bring himself into this scrape, he must endeavour to conciliate his quondam companions by lying himself out of it.

Behold the brothers again upon their journey; not, as before, exploring bye-lanes, rocky acclivities, barren heaths, and towering mountains, but bowling along a fine turnpike-road, with the agreeable Mr. Cramptext, and a proper escort *en suite*. In this way they continued to travel as quick as four posthorses could convey them, stopping only for necessary refreshments, as themselves or the animals required, but holding no converse with the prisoner, except to inquire their route, till arriving at a small village, when Cramptext advised them to halt. From hence he directed their attention to a narrow winding outlet, which led to a small romantic kind of dell, enclosed on every side by surrounding hills, and affording a safe and natural covert to any that had chosen to fix their tents in so sequestered a spot; and here he

he gave the travellers to understand their journey terminated.

After a short consultation between the parties, it was at length agreed they should quit the carriage, and leaving it at the village, proceed straight to the dell; taking care at the same time to marshal their attendants, so as the captive should not give them the slip, when, after winding down this narrow declivity for about half a mile, the dell in question opened immediately before them.

This proved to be a spot fertile in the humble, though luxuriant decorations of nature—a beautiful little valley, shaded by sloping hills in all their verdure clad; and whilst the rich hazel, with other coppice wood, fringed their summits, flowers of every shape and hue studded the intermediate spaces, wasting their sweetness on the desert air, unseen of man. A limpid brook, whose waters, bubbling over the pebbles, which here and there impeded its course, intersected the grassy bottom, and with

with its pleasing murmurs broke upon the stillness that reigned around. But this was not all—a further addition to the picturesque greeted their eyes as they advanced up the dell. At the foot of one of the hills, which bent its brow, luxuriantly shaded with overhanging wood, whilst the brook ran parallel with the front, leaving just space sufficient for the purpose, were pitched several grotesque tents, before which groups of the wandering tribe of whom they were in search, in their wildest apparel, were pursuing their different occupations. In one place, seated on the grass, were observed four or five of different sexes, aping their superiors, by dedicating their time to cards; others, crouching on the ground, were whiffing the smoke in short curling eddies from their ebony tubes, yeclept tobacco-pipes; some were nursing their brats, whilst a few of the females had the appearance of being actually engaged at some kind of useful employment, and the children continued

to

to chase each other round the smoking caldron.

During the space of a few minutes, the travellers stopped to contemplate the attractive scene, whilst each confessed it to be worthy the pencil of a Wilkie, could he have been a spectator at the moment; but, pleasing as it was to the eye of the beholder, the pleasure was but of short duration: the grouping dissolved, and all became anarchy and confusion, as, with clamorous yells, they rushed towards the strangers to petition for their bounty.

In a moment sir Hugh Singleton beheld himself surrounded by nearly the whole crew, each vociferously imploring his charity; whilst the more juvenile cast their eyes around his person, in order to discover if they could lay their pilfering fingers on a stray handkerchief. Struck with their squalid appearance, their canting phrases, and their thievish propensities, a pang of horror darted through the bosoms of the brothers, as they mentally exclaimed—

"Are

"Are these the wretches with whom it has been the adverse fate of our darling boy to associate? What may he not have endured, and how may his morals have been corrupted, during the unlucky period?" During this their eyes quickly glanced amongst the group, in search of their long-lost treasure; but no Frederick was to be observed, as they had been accustomed to behold him. Another dreadful apprehension now rushed upon their minds—perhaps he had been made to undergo some shocking metamorphose, in order to disguise him from his friends. They had never recollected to question Cramptext on this head, and the supposition now was agony—they feared to find him at least horribly disfigured—perhaps a cripple; and again the searching eye of solicitude wandered over every child bearing the least similitude in age or size to him they had lost; but all in vain, for in none of the ragamuffins before them, could they

distinguish a vestige of his beloved lineaments.

Grown impatient at length by this delay to his wishes, sir Hugh, in an authoritative tone, commanded Cramptext to fulfil the purport of their journey immediately, by bringing forward his nephew. The trembling culprit, although prepared for what was to ensue, now shook in every limb as he listened to the imperative command, and in a voice faint with apprehension, he demanded of the old man, who stood foremost in the circle, to see Ambrose. Ambrose had been absent some days, was the reply. Where then was the boy, of whom Ambrose had been accustomed to take care? he inquired, thus veiling, under a figurative mode of speech, his true meaning.—"Why he is missing," was the laconic reply.

"Missing!" reiterated sir Hugh, as the equivocal meaning of the word struck like a thunderbolt on his heart.

"Missing!"

"Missing!" re-echoed Josiah, whilst to the affrighted imagination of the startled Cramptext, the prison-doors were already yawning to receive their victim. "And was it for this, scoundrel!" continued Mr. Singleton, addressing himself to the trembling wretch before him, now completely caught in his own toils—"was it for this, I say, that you have dared to decoy us hither under false pretences? But dread their vengeance, for the utmost penalty of the law shall be exacted against thee;" then turning to the attendants, who, upon hearing their master's words, had already surrounded the hypocrite, he gave him in charge, as their future prisoner, commanding them to keep him in close custody, or their own safety should pay the forfeit of their negligence.

The guilty wretch now endeavoured to exculpate himself from the present charge, by declaring that he had left the young gentleman with this company when he took his leave, and had fully expected

to have found him there on his return; but this, instead of exonerating him from guilt, only plunged him still thicker into difficulties, by confessing to the whole gang his intent, by going thus secretly to work, of defrauding them of their share of the reward offered for the restoration of Frederick, by appropriating the whole of it to himself.

Enraged at this mark of his duplicity, the whole of the party now opened upon him like a pack of hounds; and the epithets of "spy," "informer," with many other opprobrious appellations, assailed him. They then, by way of retaliation for the baseness of his conduct, began to relate all they knew of the circumstance, adding, that it was he, Cramptext alone, who had been the instigator, if not the perpetrator of the crime; and upon him alone ought to rest the punishment.

This hypothesis was not so readily subscribed to on the part of the inflexible Josiah, who felt as if the whole set deserved extirpation

extirpation from the earth; not only in regard to their nefarious conduct towards his son, but for their mischievous propensities in general. But this was not a moment to irritate such wretches by confessing his sentiments; his aim was to learn, if possible, what was become of Frederick, if he was really in the land of the living, and still subject to their power; or, as the ambiguity of the word *missing* seemed to imply, he was indeed no more.

For this purpose then, in as firm and subdued a tone as he could command, regarding the old man, at the same time, with an eye so penetrating, that seemed to search the deepest recesses of his heart, Mr. Singleton demanded that he would answer precisely, and without equivocation, what had become of the young gentleman, who had been brought amongst them some months since, by (as his people had said) the instigation of the rascal before them. The old man, at this direct appeal, stepped forward with an humble bend of the body,

at the same time raising his hat, and giving his long silvery hair to the winds, whilst a kind of beseeching smile irradiated his sun-burnt visage, and proceeded to say—"that for aught he knew to the contrary, the youngster was well and happy; but *where*, it was impossible for him to say, that being beyond his poor conception."

"'Rascal!" vociferated sir Hugh, whilst his lip quivered with contending emotions, "darest thou prevaricate? answer me directly to the point, or you shall have cause to repent your temerity. At what time, and in what manner, did you lose sight of the young gentleman in question?"

Still bending in a conciliating attitude, while a something which he meant for a smile, but which might have been denominated a grin, rested upon his countenance, the hoary-headed sinner immediately replied—"I ax your honour's pardon, no offence, I hope; I sartinly did not mane to deceive your honour in this business, but

but will be after telling you the whole of the sequel in a jiffey, and this it is:—when our party, an plase ye, quitted winter-quarters, in order to reach their present pleasant abode, we all travelled on very comfortably and nately together, except the lad about whom you are making such a pother; and he, from not being very hearty during the wintry sason, was not, I suppose, quite strong enough to keep up with the rest. This at first gave us a little trouble, but our comrade Ambrose, who, as I may say, had always taken him under his protection, and who, for the last week or two, had been ill also, lagged behind with him; but both bringing up the rear at night, their absence was not so much regarded.

"On the third morning, however, from our setting out, we found that Ambrose had been very ill during the night, and was even then unable to continue his journey, when the rest of the party not liking to halt longer than the time deemed necessary for sleep, left him still the tenant

of the miserable hovel, which had sheltered him for the night, and again set forward on their journey.

"Well, your honour, as we proceeded onwards, again young 'Come-by-chance,' the name we gave him when he first comed amongst us, was observed to be loitering behind, and we were several times obliged to stop till he overtook the rest of us, when I was forced to remonstrate with him a little upon his negligence.—'Arrah, how is this, my honey?' says I; 'you don't stand pretty behaved to-day, to be after lagging so far astern of us! Keep up, keep up, my jewel, or you will have a little wholesome on your back;' but this was said, your honour, only by way of a spur, for, on my conscience, I never hurt a hair of his head in my life. Well, gentlemin, in answer to this, the little spalpeen cried out that his legs were weary, and that he could not walk any faster.—'Och, well, and if that is it,' said I, 'why you shall have my own Neddy, and I will take

take a spell at walking myself.' So saying, I mounted him on my beautiful sleek-eared little tramper, that carried him like a darling, and then I thought he would be sure to make his way good with us. But in a short while Neddy fell in love with a lot of tempting thistles, that grew invitingly by the road-side; and I thought, as the poor beast had not eaten much in the day, and the lad seemed inclined to indulge him, why he might as well take a mouthful or two, whilst we unwittingly jogged forward. From time to time, however, I cast an eye behind me, not doubting in the least but that Neddy would soon overtake us, though I could see nothing of him or his rider, till my old legs ached again, and gave me to understand they could not support their burthen much longer. It was now become necessary to wait for them in good earnest; but neither the youngster nor Neddy hove in sight, and I began to think the little rasc——I beg pardon, your honours, for swearing—I

began to think that Neddy was as bad as his rider, and that both seemed disposed to give us the slip; when after waiting near an hour, without seeing a vestige of either, it was agreed to dispatch one of the company in pursuit of them. Again we had to wait for the return of our messenger, who, after scampering back again for two or three miles, and peering into every nook and corner as he passed, at length discovered Neddy quietly browzing on those same thistles that had at first attracted his attention, but Come by-chance seemed gone by design, as he could obtain no traces of him; nor have we either seen or heard of the runaway since; and this, your honours, I will take my affidavy, is the whole truth of the matter."

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

DISAPPOINTMENT again shed her baleful influence over the mind of the discomfited sir Hugh, while he felt himself foiled in the double expectation he had indulged, that of being able to embrace his nephew, whilst he forced him from the hands of the miscreants who had so long detained him from his arms; and he became, in consequence, again the prey of fear, doubt, and suspicion.

What was next to be done?—Should they, he questioned within himself, stand tamely by, giving implicit credence to the old man's tale, without a due investigation into the truth of what he had advanced? certainly not: for the purpose then of ascertaining it the more effectually, he thought the best measure would be to seize upon

the old man as an accomplice with Cramptext, and by confronting them together, they might arrive at the truth of the affair, while his evidence would go towards criminating the artful villain who had thus been playing a double part amongst them. Without more ado then, the attendants were commanded to lay hold of the old man, in order to conduct him with Cramptext before the first acting magistrate; where it was hoped they would meet the reward due to their merited crimes.

Against this coercion the old man now loudly vociferated, exclaiming, that "he knew nothing of the young vagabond, and that it was Ambrose whom they ought to seize, not him, since it was he that had brought the imp amongst them; and it was from him that they should look for intelligence, if they were not satisfied with what he had told them."

To the strength of this argument, perhaps the brothers in some measure assented; but where was this Ambrose he spoke of,

as

as having so much to do in this affair, to be found? Should they return to the hovel mentioned by the old man, where they had left him some time before, he had doubtlessly taken his departure from thence if he was alive; and to seek information from a dead man, would be rather an incongruous idea. To trust therefore to the discovery of this Ambrose they thought altogether impolitic; for should they lose the present opportunity of gaining further information, as well as punishing these rascals, who must have been equally guilty of the nefarious act in question, another might not occur. The signal therefore, as has been previously stated, was immediately given, the old man and his copartner in guilt properly secured, and the rest of the party in due order prepared with them to quit this fascinating valley.

During the unexpected controversy which had taken place, the rest of the tribe had been passive spectators of the scene; but no sooner did they behold their leader, their

their *father*, as they were wont to style him, led off in order to become entangled in the trammels of Justice, who so pertinaciously holds her balance even, that she cannot be prevailed upon to let it preponderate, even in favour of the fallen culprit, than their wrath broke forth like a smothered flame, which rages the fiercer for having been repressed; and a violent effort, in order to effect his rescue, seemed in agitation. The party however of the opponents consisted chiefly of old men, women, and children, the stouter part of the community being absent in pursuance of their daily functions; and these could only vent their rage in wild clamour and abuse against sir Hugh, Cramptext, and the whole party, when finding themselves unable to effect their purpose of liberating the old man, by the steady perseverance of Josiah, who conducted the whole affair, their wrath broke forth against the defenceless preacher, whom they accused of being the instigator of all the mischief about to befall them:

and

and while they insulted him with every opprobrious epithet, and threatened him with the vengeance of the whole tribe, should he ever dare to come within reach of their fangs, he in return thundered against them all the horrors of perdition, to which he averred they were quickly hastening for their ingratitude; and prophesied, like Maw-worm in the Hypocrite, that they would still be glad to lay hold of the skirts of his garment to assist them in their flight towards heaven.

As the gentlemen with their prisoners wound securely up the ascent leading from the dell, the tumult gradually subsided, and at length all became quiet; the unruly horde were now seen sullenly retreating to their tents, not daring to follow their captive companion into the village, for fear of worse consequences; for here, as well as in many other places, they were only tolerated from a dread of the mischief they might commit, if persecuted; they understood the

compact

compact very well, and therefore took care not to provoke hostilities. Here the party regained their carriage, and with the addition they had made to their company, set off as expeditiously as possible to the nearest town, where they might light upon a magistrate.

An hour's brisk driving brought our travellers within sight of C——; here they knew they should be at no loss for what they sought; and alighting at the principal inn which the town afforded, were at their request immediately conducted before the mayor, who drawing his conclusions from the report given of these vagrants, whose own confessions only went towards criminating each other, he soon found good cause for committing them both to the county gaol, there to remain till the ensuing assizes, when they would be tried by the laws of their country for *child-stealing*; and if they could not then prove the existence of the child in question, they

they were given to understand, a much heavier charge would be preferred against them—that of being his murderer.

The dreaded prison, whose very name had fearfully rung in the ears, whilst its terrific form had floated on the imagination of the shuddering Cramptext, now opened its ponderous jaws to receive him in reality; and having delivered him into the hands of the merciless gaoler, who, frequently insensible to the misfortunes of his prisoners, seeks only to torment them, and by his cruelties study to increase their torments, the travellers again bent their weary steps towards home. But with what different sensations did they now enter it from those they experienced at setting out on their successless errand! then, borne high on the buoyant pinion of hope, all was joy and pleasing expectation; now the abyss of disappointment yawned before them, surrounded by grief, anxiety, and despair.

Again all clue that might have led to the

the discovery of the fugitive had disappeared, and his fate still remained wrapped in the darkest uncertainty, without a single ray of light to point out the path next to be pursued. Sir Hugh again recommended the advertising him, with an additional reward, in which Josiah, though accustomed all his life to the frugal system which taught him to keep with care what had been acquired with difficulty, acceded: while Mrs. Singleton strenuously advised their remounting their horses, and scouring the face of the country; for by that means they might be enabled to penetrate into the most secret passes where a carriage could not proceed: adding, that if the old man's tale was true, in such places as those they would be the most likely to discover her darling son, though they might hazard breaking their necks; but "nothing venture, nothing have," she exclaimed, "and I'd either win the horse, or lose the saddle," if it rested with me to determine. In this controversy, with the reader's leave,

we

we will now leave them, who, it is hoped, will feel himself sufficiently interested in the fate of our hero to excuse the digression, and endeavour, like the agitated family, to see what is become of him.

Frederick, during a long and tedious winter, had pined in dark captivity; for as his going abroad could be of no essential service to his tyrants, he being too sickly, besides what they termed *stupid*, to render them any kind of benefit in that way, it was not thought necessary for him to scent the invigorating breeze on his own account; it was therefore the idea alone of quitting these horrible caverns in the spring that supported him, when a vague hope would intervene of his being able, in one way or other, to accomplish his liberty. To this hope then, though a shallow one, he had clung for support, like the despairing sailor when he clasps the mast of his sinking vessel, which he believes will overstop the rising waves, ready to overwhelm him in his distress; and when the hour arrived

rived that brought the glad tidings of their removal, his young heart bounded high with the expectation of some coming good, some happy reverse of fate, that was to reward him for his past sufferings, by his emancipation from the hands of his enemies.

The morning that dawned upon the departure of the motley group from their solitary dwelling was refulgently lovely. Phœbus shone forth in all his lustre; not a cloud advanced to obscure the clear serene of the horizon; the lively choristers of the groves, as the party passed along, warbled their dulcet notes from every spray, whilst the air emitted a soft and renovating fragrance.

Could such a morning as this fail to shed its invigorating influence on the forlorn invalid, who, in a great measure, had been debarred the cheering light of heaven for so many months of his existence?—No, it had all the effect which such a change, from confinement to apparent liberty, could

be

be supposed to produce—that of enlivening his spirits, bracing his solids, and renovating his whole nervous system; and by so doing, had rendered him sufficiently courageous to undertake the step he had meditated—that of escaping from his persecutors.

The only stumbling-block in the way of the now-resolute boy was the cripple Ambrose. From what cause he was unable to account, but this person never lost sight of him; while therefore he continued to watch him so closely, Frederick knew that to make any attempt at his meditated liberation would be in vain. But when he, so opportunely for our hero, fell sick, and was obliged to be left behind in the hovel, then was the time, the golden opportunity, which, if once lost, might never be regained; and so well did he avail himself of it, that leaving the old man's ass, as has been already explained, by the roadside, he speedily made off in a contrary direction, and was soon beyond the reach of his

way could the unfortunate wanderer now bend his weary steps?—to scale the mountain's craggy height was altogether impracticable; equally impossible and unprofitable was it, he thought, to descend the ravine's rocky steeps, whilst the barren moor held out no other prospect but fatigue without end, and fainting for want of food. Besides, it was now high noon, and the sun poured his hottest rays on the defenceless head of the exhausted traveller; when feeling his strength fail, and his limbs in too relaxed a state to bear him farther, he threw himself despairingly upon a jutting point of rock, which, clothed with a rich heathery verdure, invited to repose; and here, insensible of danger, he soon fell into a profound sleep, forgetting alike the woes that overwhelmed him, and the perils by which he was surrounded.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

PHŒBUS' last diverging rays, as he slowly sunk behind the "cloud-capt" mountain, slanted with a mellow lustre on the spot where Frederick had

"Stretch'd his boyish form,"

as sleep forsook him. The scene which he had so lately contemplated, as glowing in all the height of summer brightness, he now beheld thrown into shade, and many distant objects which he recollected as forming prominent parts in the landscape were now scarcely visible. Hardly crediting his own senses, that a few short hours could have made such an alteration, or that he could have remained in the same place in which he had lain himself down to rest, he

arose, rubbed his eyes, and took every measure to assure himself that he was really and truly awake, and still in the very identical situation in which sleep had overtaken and made him his prisoner.

Scarcely now did the last glowing light of day's brilliant luminary gild the top of the mountain—the shadows below began to thicken, and night seemed closing in on every side; still no friendly habitation, as he wildly gazed around, greeted his longing eye—no protecting spot that could afford shelter for the night came within the compass of his observation; and the wild and desolate cavern that he had so lately occupied became, in his present dilemma, an object of regret. To quit the local situation he now possessed, to wander he knew not whither, perhaps to run into tenfold danger, prudence forbade: flinging himself therefore again upon the friendly earth, where he had so long reposed himself, he prepared to take up his former position, and endeavour to steep his sorrows in

sleep's

sleep's oblivious stream till morning; and now

> " Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
> And in the sky the stars are met;
> And on the wave a deeper blue,
> And on the leaf a browner hue;
> And in the heaven, that clear obscure,
> So softly dark, and darkly pure,
> That follows the decline of day,
> As twilight melts beneath the moon away:"

but the repose courted by the unhappy Frederick fled his pursuit, whilst painful vigils usurped its place; and when the moon broke forth in all her chastened lustre, and

> " A lovelier, purer light than that of day
> Rests on the scene,"

he again quitted his grassy bed, and peeped around in search of succour; for heavy and chill now fell the dews of night, a painful languor was stealing through his wearied limbs, and he felt as if, in his present forlorn state, he should be scarce able to exist till morning—much less again to see home,

and those beloved friends who were, he doubted not, at this very moment bitterly bewailing his wayward fate.

Lost in these melancholy reflections, he continued to pace with feeble steps the boundary he had marked out for himself, till, as the moon threw her pale light on a fissure in the rock immediately within his vicinity, he fancied he beheld something resembling a beaten path that appeared to wind down its declivity. Hoping that what he saw might prove a beacon to conduct him to some place of shelter, where he might at least be able to stretch himself in greater security than upon the damp grass which he had quitted, he cautiously overstepped the hanging brink, and gaining a firm footing, found that he had not been deceived in his conjectures.

The little narrow path in which Frederick now discovered himself a pedestrian, led in a rapid descent down the rocky side of the ravine. This he lightly followed, till he reached, as nearly as he could conjecture,

jecture, half way down the rugged steep, when looking earnestly before him, he could distinguish no resemblance of what he sought, all below being shrouded in the darkness of night. To have pursued his way farther, he deemed impolitic, if not dangerous; for how could he say into what labyrinth of mischief it might not lead him? Stopping short, therefore, he began to consider what were best to be done in this new dilemma, and at the same time examining the spot as well as he was able by the partial light of the moon, he was struck on a sudden by the appearance of a small recess in the side of the hill just behind him. Here he conjectured he might find a safe retreat till morning, and creeping cautiously into the cavity, he soon discovered it to be a sand-hole, perfectly soft and dry, when throwing himself on its friendly bottom, he again lost sight of his griefs and cares in a profound sleep.

"Willey, Willey, Willey!" sounded confusedly in the ears of the young sleeper, ere

he had unclosed his eyes again to welcome day; and "Willey, Willey!" again rung through his oracular organs, as he endeavoured to collect his scattered senses sufficiently to ascertain where he was. Raising himself quickly at the repeated sound upon his hands and knees, he tried to peep from his concealment, for that purpose, when he observed the sun riding high in the heavens, from which he concluded the day was far advanced; but still no tempting little white cottage, or even miner's hut, such as he had been accustomed to observe in his former expeditions, broke the wild sameness of the rocky chasm, to promise the relief he so much needed.

Sleep had indeed kindly refreshed his wearied limbs, but *hunger*, with her vulture beak, was gnawing in his bosom; for be it remembered that the unfortunate pedestrian had not tasted food since he shared the gipsies breakfast twenty-four hours before; and how to procure a supply of that necessary article in the present emergency, when

when not a human habitation came within his ken, was past conception. Sick therefore with terror, as the idea of perishing for want in this wild place presented itself, he again fell half-fainting on his sandy couch, and covering his face with his hands, burst into a violent flood of tears.

Bitter was the torrent that now flowed from Frederick's eyes, when again the repetition of "Willey!" as it mingled with the roar of the falling cataract, struck on his ears. It could not have been a dream then which haunted his troubled fancy, but was in reality the echo of a human voice, and that a very sweet one, which had so often repeated the welcome dissyllable: but whether it was

"I' th' air or the earth,"

he could not tell; all he knew was, that it fell sweetly on his heart, as portentous of saving him from a cruel and perhaps a lingering death.

Buoyant with hope's radiant smile, he

now hastily prepared to quit his resting-place, when, at the instant he was stepping forth, a beautiful pied goat clattered past him, which bounding up the steep he observed, had gained the side of a female stationed on a point of rock above, and whose errand there, if he might judge by the caresses she lavished on the animal, was to seek the truant favourite, and hers the voice which had so sweetly sounded in his longing ears.

Now then was the lucky minute for the almost despairing boy, when, by rendering himself visible, he might obtain the relief which his pressing necessities so immediately required; and for that purpose he now contrived to place himself in the path which he saw the female and her lively companion preparing to descend, and not without some perturbation awaited their approach.

As the female continued leisurely to advance along the rugged path before her, Frederick observed one end of a cord fastened

ened round the horns of the restive animal, while the other was twisted round the hand of his conductress, who was stooping every moment to caress her charge, whilst he as instinctively kept looking up, as if to demand pardon for his trespass, till a small turn in the projecting rock gave her a full view of the supplinnt, as he stood ready to prefer his eager petition.

In a moment, as if struck by some horrific vision, the female started back, when, upon Frederick's advancing a step or two, the goat began butting with all his might; and then, as if to escape the object of his dislike, he bounded past him, dragging his mistress, who, unable to extricate her hand from the cord which bound her to her captive, was precipitated by him from steep to steep, till they reached a projection which overhung the dashing torrent; from whence, had she not clung to some bushes which peeped from the narrow fissures of the rock, and by so doing stopped the wild progress of the affrighted animal, both

might have fallen, thence to rise no more.

Frederick observing the perilous situation in which the giddy animal had thus plunged his conductress, immediately darted forward in order to effect her liberation; and making as rapid a descent as his weakness allowed, he soon reached the spot where the unfortunate pair seemed awaiting inevitable destruction. Here, having obtained a sure footing, he caught firm hold of the female with one hand, while with the other he hastened to unloose the cord, which, by attaching her to the goat, had been the origin of this disaster; when finding himself at liberty, he again scampered off without ceremony, leaving his terrified mistress to the care of her young preserver.

The attention of the dauntless boy, who had thus volunteered, at the peril of his own life, to save that of a fellow-creature, was now called towards the being he had almost miraculously saved. That it was a female, her garments, though equally wild

wild and grotesque with those worn by the females with whom he had of late associated, had informed him; but of what size, age, or complexion, so transient had been his view of her, and so strongly had he been wrapped in the blissful idea of relieving his necessities, he had not been able to determine. Judge therefore his surprise, when, in raising the object of his solicitude from the recumbent posture in which she had clung to the rock, he beheld a beautiful girl, apparently of a more tender age than himself, but who still shewed signs of the utmost terror at his presence.

Frederick, whose natural wants became every moment more pressing, and who thought he discovered in the little mountaineer a strong disposition to escape him, now began with great earnestness to plead for assistance; beseeching her to permit him to follow her home, in order to appease the hunger by which he was devoured. A the first sound of his voice she started, then eyed him from head to foot, as if he

was an object still to be dreaded; but at the repetition of the word *hunger*, a look of heaven-born pity emanated from her eyes, and as she reascended the steep, she timidly made him a sign to follow her.

With a light and airy step, the naked feet of the little wanderer now patted up the rugged crags, till she had nearly reached the spot from whence she had been so rudely dragged; here gaining a narrow ledge of the rock which shelved along the steep side of this tremendous chasm, she rapidly tripped along its winding descent, followed by Frederick, when having reached the bottom, she proceeded in a straight line to the mouth of the ravine, which opened in a small valley surrounded by hills; here abruptly turning a corner, she flew into a small cabin, which appeared to be suspended from a part of the broken ground that rose almost perpendicularly above it, and shutting the door, vanished instantly from her companion's sight.

Again was the wretched Frederick lost in

in painful conjecture. Had then his little wild conductress really abandoned him, and could she be so refined in cruelty as to draw him on to follow her, only to shut her door in his face, when he so much needed her commiseration, were questions which rapidly occurred, as he stood irresolute how to proceed; and again the bitter tears of heartfelt disappointment and regret coursed each other down his wan cheek, as he called to remembrance the forlorn state to which he was reduced.—"Oh, my uncle! my father!" burst spontaneously from his agonized lips, as he nearly sunk to the earth, "could you but know the deplorable state of your poor Frederick, how would your kind, your affectionate hearts prompt you to fly to his rescue!"

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

SCARCELY had the foregoing expressions escaped the half-distracted Frederick, than feeling some degree of relief in thus venting the sorrow by which he was so heavily oppressed, he proceeded to take a more accurate survey of the little dwelling, which now possessed greater attractions in his eyes than all the glittering palaces which he had either heard or read of. Its dimensions, to be sure, were very small, and so sunk in the side of the hill which sheltered it from above, as to be scarcely visible to the eye of the passing stranger; while

"———————— Its low roof,
With stone plants and with moss, was o'ergrown,
Short fern, and richer weeds, which from the eaves
Hung their long tresses down."

For

For some time, with anxious eye, he stood contemplating this object of his solicitude, without venturing to advance a step nearer; when, to his inexpressible delight, he beheld the door slowly open, and a view of the little conductress blessed his sight. Cautiously she appeared to peep forth, and beholding Frederick still standing in the spot where she had left him, she slowly advanced a few steps; when perceiving him earnestly attentive to her proceedings, she beckoned him to approach, and turning, again entered the cabin.

With a heart whose pulsations beat quick with joy, the half-famished boy bounded forward to obey the welcome mandate, and quickly crossing the threshold of that door which was left open to receive him, he found himself happily withinside of that coveted dwelling he had so ardently contemplated without. Here the first object which presented itself to his glistening eyes, was a small low table

table covered with viands, which, to his enraptured senses, appeared the most tempting he had ever beheld; and to his taste, when he was invited to partake of them, the most delicious. Never had he feasted upon the various delicacies at his uncle's table with half the *gout* with which he now devoured the slices of brown bread, with their savoury accompaniment of delicious Welsh cheese, that was now set before him.

So intent was Frederick upon satisfying the imperative demands of nature, that he had never thought of observing to whom, save his young friend, he had been indebted for so delicious a meal. But the cravings of hunger being allayed, the grateful boy, in order to return his thanks where most due, sent an inquiring eye round the room in quest of his generous entertainer.

Reposing in a high-backed wicker chair, that appeared to have been manufactured in the year one, by the side of a glowing fire, was an ancient female; beside her stood

stood his young conductress, with one arm thrown around her neck, while she alternately looked up at her, or gazed on Frederick, a few words, which he could not understand, passing between them at the same time. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast of youth and age, with their peculiar attributes thus exhibited. The silver stragglers, disdaining the confinement of a thick white cap that partly covered them, crept over the sunken temples and wrinkled front of their owner; while around the open brow of the other,

"——— The light long tresses wreath'd,
As if young Love had twin'd, in sportive show,
Those locks to mimic his pernicious bow."

For like the Nazarite of old, no scissars had approached her head to crop its silken treasures, which had been suffered to grow, like those of mother Eve, in wild luxuriance, and, like hers, flowing behind in wavy ringlets almost reaching to her feet.

Sometimes

Sometimes the possessor of this envied treasure would bound with it, wild and flowing, through the environs of their little dwelling, exhibiting the appearance of some wood-nymph; while at others she would twist the ample braid across her polished forehead, and fastening it in a knot behind, the Grecian line of countenance would bespeak her one of the muses in her infancy, sent to revisit the earth, had not her ordinary costume destroyed the illusion. Her small white feet had never been encumbered with either shoe or stocking, nor had the graceful sandal, adopted by the tuneful nine, supplied the place of these articles; for alike insensible of cold or heat, wet or dry, they had been accustomed to a primitive state of nudity; whilst a little jacket, composed of a striped linsey-woolsey, with a short petticoat of the same, constituted the outward garb of this interesting *child of Nature.*

During Frederick's repast, the soft blue eyes of this enchanting little being had been

been turned upon him with looks of seeming wonder and interest, diverted from time to time to the face of her ancient friend, fraught with the most eager inquiry; and at such times a language, of which he was totally ignorant, except recognizing the word *Saxon*, passed between them. This language was of course Welsh, and Saxon meant the appellation by which the common people generally distinguish the English; and although our young traveller had first drawn his breath on the confines of the principality, he had never yet heard the dialect spoken, and now felt as totally ignorant of what was passing, as if he had been transported to the shores of Hindostan.

For a few minutes the wonder-stricken boy sat wrapped in astonishment, while he continued to contemplate the two striking figures before him. Never had he beheld the existence of one so heavily laden with the burthen which old Time contrives to cast upon the shoulder of mortals; nor in the

the other, any thing so exquisitely blooming in the graces of youth; and when he called to mind, that he had in all probability been the preserver of this beautiful little being, who he thought looked so like some of his uncle's exquisite pictures, he felt his heart beat high with self-complacency, nay, he even thought the magnitude of the service gave him a right to claim their hospitality.

Elated with the action which he had so fortunately achieved, Frederick now rose from his little table, where he had finished the most delicious meal he ever remembered to have tasted; and assuming the erect posture of one who seems perfectly at ease with himself, he advanced, with a firm step, towards the chimney-corner to offer his grateful thanks. As he drew nearer to these singular beings, he observed that his young conductress involuntarily started, and again shewed symptoms of apprehension, though apparently tinctured with Eve's first failing—curiosity; for instead of flying as before, she now, although still

still clinging to the side of her ancient friend, protruded her head, while a smile dimpled her cheek, as she regarded the object before her.

"Welcome, my boy!" said the dame, in plain English, while she extended one of her shrivelled hands to meet the warm touch of Frederick's plump one, "welcome! It is a long time since, except my own Love's here, that I have beheld a countenance open and comely as thine; say, what brought thee to these dreary wilds, and whither tend thy lonely steps? Fear not," she continued, "to gaze upon my withered form, but look up and answer me."

This injunction from his hostess was necessary, for again had Frederick's head sunk upon his breast, in order to conceal the starting tear which this kind salutation, united with his forlorn condition, had drawn to his eye. Quickly however recovering himself, he proceeded simply to relate the circumstance of his having been forcibly carried away by the cripple Ambrose,

brose, his detention afterwards by the gipsies, with his fortunate escape from them; and how, by seeking to obtain shelter for the night, chance had conducted him into the vicinity of her habitation. Here he thought proper to stop, for if his little guide had omitted to relate what followed in his rencontre with her, the old woman must remain in ignorance, for Frederick had too great a share of modesty to be his own trumpeter.

"But your friends, boy—you have friends, perhaps parents—where are they?"

"Alas! yes, I have both—a father and mother, and a dear kind uncle, who have no doubt mourned for their long-lost Frederick, and perhaps ere this believe him dead; but I hope, now that I have escaped from these wicked men, I shall soon see them all again, when they will make the deceitful wretch, who tore me from my home, confess his reasons for so doing, while they will amply reward all those who afford me protection."

"*Right,*

"*Right*, child; deception should be brought to light, and even in this world receive its meed of punishment, as a beacon to warn others from pursuing the hateful vice. But where do you dwell?"

"At Myfod Vale, my uncle; and there also used to dwell the happy Frederick, on the borders of Monmouthshire."

"Alack, alack!" replied the dame, "a distance of many miles still separates you. But go, child, sit down and compose yourself after your wanderings; and you, Love," addressing her youthful companion, who had been an attentive auditor of the foregoing discourse, "attend to your charge, who, I think, by this time, are in waiting."

The bleating of several goats was now heard outside of the cabin, when *Love*, the common appellation by which the old dame addressed this lovely girl, took the hint, and kissing her ancient friend, she placed a large wooden bowl on her head, and set out to milk her favourites; after which she

she again drove them forth to pick their scanty herbage for the night.

In the latter employment, Frederick would have been glad to have assisted, but not daring to quit the stool on which the dame had placed him, he continued to sit regarding the motions of the little *paysanne*, whilst his companion, indulging a solemn silence, left him in doubt whether she were quietly sinking into the arms of Morpheus, or deeply ruminating on some past event—in other words, asleep or awake.

The business of the day concluded, *Love* on her return prepared their evening meal. This consisted of two porringers of the delicious milk just drawn from the little stock, with an additional slice or two of the aforesaid brown bread; one of these she carried to the dame, and the other she offered to their visitor; but he having feasted so largely already, refused this second mark of hospitality; when, at the decline of day, they betook themselves to their humble pallet, and Frederick to some dry

dry heath, which had been placed in the corner of an adjoining lean-to, as a part of their fuel, where the profound repose that seldom fails to visit the innocent, closed their eyes till morning.

Sol, in his ascent the next day, had scarcely peeped over the rocky ravine that enclosed the rustic cabin, and illumined its little casement below, than its peaceful inmates awoke to enjoy one of the loveliest mornings that had ever shone forth to greet them with its smiles. Already had the little herd quitted their mountainous retreats, and assembled before the door of the humble dwelling, awaiting with impatience the appearance of their young attendant to present them with their morning repast; when she, desirous of commencing her daily task, immediately came forth to milk, and afterwards drive them back to their pasture. In the latter charge she was now assisted by Frederick, who, impatient of longer confinement, had sallied forth with his young friend, and to

whose discipline the sometimes refractory Willey was obliged quietly to submit. Never had the unfortunate boy felt his heart so lightened from care, since his estrangement from home, as at this moment; and never since that melancholy period, had he spoken to human beings with whom his sentiments were so much in unison. Here it was that the phantom *fear* had first ceased to pursue him; and here he first felt a portion of ease, derived from the certainty of safety, enter his breast—*ease* that was bliss to one who had so long known only sorrow. Besides, here were two beings whom, although strangers, he felt that he could both love and venerate. Had they not preserved him, he asked, from the gnawing pangs of famine? had they not afforded him a shelter from the cold dews of night? and he entertained no doubt but they would further assist him in regaining his beloved friends and his home.

Thus ruminating on his present situation,

tion, and the joys to come, Frederick, after quitting his charge, wandered on, almost unconscious of the presence of his little companion, who now ventured to walk on timidly by his side, till they again reached the cabin. Here they found the ancient dame busily employed in providing for their breakfast, and bestirring herself with something like the alacrity of youth. Again the two porringers of goat's milk, with their general accompaniment, graced the humble board; and again, as no superfluity marked the contents of the mansion, these being the precise number they possessed, the same ceremony between the young people prevailed; when the dame stepped in to settle the amicable dispute, by saying that, according to etiquette, which might exist even in a Welsh cottage, Love, being a female, ought to have precedence, and that Frederick should breakfast afterwards.

Their simple meal concluded, the females betook themselves to their wheels.

These occupied them for the next three or four hours, when, even here, their young visitor contrived to make himself useful—not, like Hercules, by wielding the distaff, but by winding the yarn which they spun. After this, the dame, by way of relaxation from labour, took her crutch-stick, and followed by the children, ascended, with a steady step, the path which wound alongside the ravine, in order to breathe the pure and bracing air which saluted her from above. Here she rested, whilst her youthful companions, frolicking and bounding from cliff to cliff, culled for her acceptance the most blooming of nature's sweets. Thus between alternate amusement and employment passed the day, till it was again time to milk the goats; after which, Sol's declining rays warned them to repose.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIONS, pure as those which beguile infants of their smiles, stole over the senses of the sleeping Frederick, as he gently reposed on his flowery bed. Here, in imagination, he again beheld Myfod Vale in all its summer bloom, again beheld his kind and beloved uncle approaching him with smiles of affection, and again felt himself warmly clasped to that heart where he knew himself sole possessor.

Thus passed the happiest night which the persecuted boy had for a long time experienced; and in the morning he awoke with renovated strength, eyes sparkling with contentment's own lustre, and the roses of health again blooming in his cheeks. Again to drive the herd to their romantic retreats, to assist his bene-

volent friends in their daily occupation, to climb the rocks, and cull the choicest flowers, afforded him heartfelt delight; and had not thoughts of home and absent friends intervened to cross the stream of pleasure which glided sweetly on, he fancied that he could have lived with such companions, and in such a situation, for ever.

To point out the simple avocations and amusements which engaged the inmates of this lowly cot for one day, were to describe a thousand; all passed successively the same, except when the weather forbade their going abroad. At such times the dame would apportion the time devoted to walking to that given to the daily instruction of her young charge, when an additional part of the Bible, which constituted the *chef-d'œuvre* of her library, was read, with appropriate comments and illustrations. Simply to read, was all the *accomplishments*, her spinning excepted, that Love could at present boast of possessing; for

for the teaching her to write, even had the old dame's nerves been sufficiently steady to enable her to guide the pen, was out of the question, as no materials for that purpose had ever been imported into the cabin, and of the Lancasterian system of tracing them in sand, she was totally ignorant; but as neither the old lady nor her pupil were troubled with correspondents, to render such an acquirement necessary, the want of it was neither felt nor regarded.

A week had nearly passed in the way described, without Frederick's having seen any marks of the "human face divine," save the inhabitants of the cabin, when he was surprised one forenoon by the appearance of a stranger, in the shape of an aged cottager, who came, he said, as usual, to ask if they stood in need of his services? —"I thank you, Perryn," answered the dame, "I shall want a bag of meal from the village rather sooner than ordinary; for I have had a visitor for these last few

days, but he begins to be tired of us—there he stands," pointing to Frederick with a stick as she spoke. "Do you think he is man enough to find his way across the country into Monmouthshire, hah, Perryn?"

"Cot save you, dame! into Monmouthshire!" repeated the old man, with a shake of the head, and a negative expression of countenance—"no, no! he may as well attempt to blow a feather against the wind, as to find his way over Plinlimmon by himself, or to gather up the snow that fell ten years ago, as to think of threading the intricacies that lie betwixt here and Monmouthshire without a guide."

"Well, what can be done in this case, Perryn? I know nobody but yourself, and you, my old friend, as well as I, are rather too far advanced in the vale of life, and something too feeble, to undertake so long a journey."

"True, Cot help us! rather too old for that inteet, as the boy must tramp it; yet not

not so old either for many other things. Why let me see, I was only ninety-two last St. Davit's tay, Cot help me! and am still hale and hearty; but you, I think, carry more years on your back than I do."

"Why yes, some six or eight, I should think; but time has blunted my memory in that article, and I can't be exactly certain; all I know is, that I have existed a very long time in the world—that I have outlived all my relations and friends, and even my *enemies*. They have all been gone to their long home an age ago; whilst I remain here a solitary memento of the years that are fled. But that is not now the question between us; as this same old age prevents both you and me from escorting my young visitor to the house of his fathers, you must try to procure me some one who can; and although I may not be rich enough to reward him for his trouble, Perryn, do you mind me, he will be sure to be paid elsewhere. And now will you look out for some one immediately, as the

poor child seems anxious to be at home again."

"To pe sure I will, dame," eagerly answered the old man, "and I have no doubt but I shall soon hit upon a suitable pody for the purpose, plase St. Davit. First there is Johnny ap Jones, my own son-in-law—but now I think of it, he is nearly as old as myself, so he wont do; then there is Peter ap Shenkin ap Price, my grandson, only he is lame of one leg, and that to pe sure is a small objection—but then there is Taffy ap Morgan, my great-grandson, and Davit ap Morgan ap Hughes, my great-nephew; and if they cannot undertake the journey, perhaps one of their sons or grandsons will make no pribbles or prabbles about it, look you, but will pe sure to manage it one way or other."

"Do so, Perryn, and let me know as soon as you can."

"I will, I will, plase Cot and St. Davit," answered Perryn, rising to take his leave, and hobbling away, muttered to himself

self—"Gwynette shall help me to find somepody; she is cute in these matters, and knows what is proper petter than I do, look you."

During the discourse between these two antediluvians, Frederick, who had long been on the watch for Love's return, and perceiving her at a distance, had flown to ease her of her burden; and re-entering the cabin-door, with the load on his head, jostled against the old man as he was coming out of it.

"Ah, ah! my youngster," he squeaked out with the treble pipe of age, while he elevated his drooping chin, and fixed his little grey eyes in the youth's face, as he attempted to pass him, "is it you we have got to manage? Ay, ay, we'll soon have you across the country, depend upon it, and again safe with the coot people you came from, look you. Yes, yes, by Cot's plessing we'll soon manage," hobbling off as he repeated his short sentences, which, with the monotonous tones in which he

uttered them, died away upon the ear of the astonished Frederick, as he watched the drooping figure slowly recede from his sight.

"Have me across the country!—see me safe with the *good people* I came from!" repeated Frederick to himself, as the old man's words still lingered in his ears; "what can this odd-looking old fellow have to do with me? I should like to see him attempt taking me across the country; in that case it would be, whose legs were longest, I fancy."

Dwelling still upon what he had heard drop from the old man, which he imagined threatened him with some new disaster, the startled boy now entered the cabin; and so absorbed was he by their singular import, that after depositing his burthen, he mechanically sat down to his daily employment, without regarding or speaking to either of his companions. This the good dame observing, and looking at him with her little dark eyes, that still twinkled with a lucid

a lucid beam, through the pursed-up furrows by which they were surrounded, while she opened her mouth, now contracted by the smile that once wantoned on her lips, to explain the plans of the morning.

To learn that there existed a probability of his again returning in safety to his friends, filled the young heart of the agitated wanderer with delight. Still there was a drawback to this expected felicity; a drop of gall had mixed its deleterious qualities in this chalice of delight, and prevented its overflowing. In case of his removal from hence, he must leave the dear old dame who had been so kind and affectionate towards him; and he must likewise bid adieu to her darling *Love* — she who had been his companion, his playfellow, his sister! and, alas! this without the hope of ever seeing them again. At Myfod Vale he had neither playfellow nor sister, he reflected, though he had a dear kind uncle; yet if he had but a sister there to meet him on his return, he should not

so much mind leaving her; but now, after being so much with Love, he should feel so lonely; and the goats too, who were already sufficiently sagacious to distinguish him, and would eat out of his hand in preference; his uncle, it was true, could soon procure him some goats, but then they would never be half so playful as his favourite Willey.

Thus, his heart palpitating with the above reflections, and fluttering between the pleasing images held forth by hope on one side, and those exhibited by regret on the other, Frederick passed another week of his existence; but old Perryn came not, as had been expected. Impatience was now about to take place of other recent sensations, when his thoughts were diverted into another channel, and himself destined to travel a different road than that pointed out by the finger-post of imagination.

One lovely evening, when the sun was still riding high in the azure firmament of heaven,

heaven, as the two young people, after finishing the last of their daily tasks—that of conducting the goats to where they could best crop the blooming herbage, were returning home, they felt an inclination to solace themselves with some of the tempting flowers, which now, spontaneously as it were, burst forth beneath their feet. Sweets of every scent and lovely hue now met their searching eyes; with delight they mount from rock to rock, and leap from chasm to chasm, in search of the blooming treasure; when, all at once, their ears were struck by the unusual sound of voices, as they vibrated in different tones from the echoing cliffs above. In an attitude of amazement, the young people now listened in order to ascertain who it was that thus disturbed the hitherto-unbroken silence of these solitudes, when they quickly discovered the wild laugh of almost childish gaiety, as it mixed at intervals with the scream of affected terror; but from whom these discordant sounds proceeded, they had yet to learn, as the parties from whence they

they issued were situated far above their ken. At length, after silently and patiently waiting the strangers approach, who, as the increasing loudness of the voices indicated, were near the rock that concealed them, the young florists perceived two or three young females, followed by a servant in an old-fashioned kind of livery. Here one of the girls, whose tongue, for flippancy of movement, might be said to hang on a swivel, declared, in a breath, that she was frightened to death, as tired as a dog, and would go no further without resting; saying which, she flung herself upon a part of the projecting rock, behind which our unintentional listeners were concealed witnesses of the following dialogue:—

"How can you be so absurd, Jeannette, as to stop now? If you go on in this way, how do you think we shall ever find the old woman's cabin to-night?"

"Hush, hush, Mary Price! a little better manners, if you please; for you may depend upon it she will know that you call

call her '*old woman*,' and perhaps wont tell us a word, in consequence of your bad behaviour, when we get there."

"Oh dear!" rejoined the first speaker, "I should be very sorry to affront her, as I expect she will tell me a great many things; and I beg her pardon with all my heart, if that will satisfy her. But do you really think she knows what we are now saying about her, Jeannette?'

"*Know!*" re echoed Miss Jeannette, "to be sure she does. Why she is more than an hundred years old, and has lived in two or three kings' reigns, and can tell every thing, past, present, and to come; besides, they do say," continued she, lowering her voice almost to a whisper as she spoke, "that if she had not taken herself off when she did, and lived in this retired out-of-the-way place, where nobody can find her, she would have been burnt for a *witch* long ago."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Mary Price, "who is talking treason now, I wonder? I am

I am sure calling her a *witch* is much worse than styling her an *old woman*; and if she refuses to tell who I am to have for my husband, with fifty other things beside that I want to know about, I shall lay it all at your door, Miss, I promise you."

"Well, Miss Jeannette," said the young man, who had hitherto been silent, "I hope that what you have so unluckily said wont go to prevent her from telling me who it was that stole my watch last week, now I've comed all this way for the purpose of a consultation on the matter; and for which I shan't mind giving her half-a-crown out of my own pocket, if so be she will direct me how to get it again."

"*I* said, fool! what have I said? *I* did not call her a *witch* of my own accord, nor yet say she ought to be burnt to death; I only repeated what I have often heard others say of her; and I dare say," added she, in a fearful tone, "that she is much too *good* to punish me for that."

"Oh,

"Oh, good gracious!" cried another of the party, who had not yet spoken, "do let us hasten back again; we shall certainly get into some scrape or other if we go near her. Who knows, perhaps she will bewitch us all, or send some of her familiar spirits to lead us astray, so that we shall never find our way back again.—Do, for Heaven's sake, let us return!"

"With all my heart," now issued from every mouth, as terrified by the phantoms they themselves had created; while each jumped up to put their design in execution, when they were stopped by the aforesaid young man, who, stepping forward with a sort of a bow, and a wave of the hand, thus began:—

"Excuse me, young ladies; I have kept your secret, and screened your coming upon this here expedition from master and mistress, upon the condition that I was to inquire about my lost watch; and now I'll be hanged if I budge one inch back again without

without seeing the good gentlewoman who may assist me in finding it."

"Oh, if we must, we must," replied Miss Jeannette. "Well, who's afraid? But remember, I did not call her a *witch*," cried she, rallying her spirits—"not I.—But you'll be sure to take care of us, Thomas ap Gilpin, and see us safe home again?"

"To be sure I will, Miss; you may depend upon me. Why I was never afraid of nothing in all my life; and when I was a boy, and worked with feyther in the mines, and all the people used to be calling out, that they had seen the evil one, why I never see'd him, nor nothing else worse than myself: so come along, ladies; we can't be now very far from the old lady's door, according to the description I have had of it, though few people know where she lives—so come along," when again the group set forward in their descent towards the cabin, though with much less of satisfaction than had hitherto marked the progress of their footsteps.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

WITH the same degree of velocity that Apollo descended from the celestial regions, when hurled to the earth by his father Jupiter, did Frederick and his companion dart from their concealment, in order to avert the danger with which their terrified imaginations now menaced their kind protectress; and scarcely had they finished their panting narration of the foregoing scene, than the party arrived at the door to confirm the truth of the statement.

"What shall we do, dear mammy?" questioned Love, in great alarm, as the burning scheme dwelt upon her imagination; "you will not let them come in, will you? Frederick and I will take care of you; we will barricade the door, and——"

"And why not let them come in?" interrupted

terrupted the dame; "they dare not injure either you or me, my child; and so far from barricading the door, I wish you to open it immediately."

Love, who had never dreamt of disobeying the will of her revered friend, now tremblingly did as she was desired, by opening the door just as the first salutation had been given, by trying the strength of their knuckles against it; when Miss Jeannette, as principal speaker, popped her head forward, and demanded, in a shrill accent, if any body was at home?

"Yes, here are three bodies," replied the dame; "pray which of us have you any business with?"

"My business lies with you, I believe," answered the young lady, as she cautiously put her foot over the threshold, and slowly advanced towards the fire, whose vivifying power age commonly feels necessary, and near which the object of their search was now sitting—"my business is with you, good woman; there are a few things which I should

I should wish to consult you upon, that is to say, two or three questions I should like to ask, as you are so clever as to know every thing, they say. In short, I mean to say," continued she, hesitatingly, for the venerable appearance of the person she was addressing awed even the volatile Miss Jeannette, "that I wish to have my *planet read*."

"Your planet read!" repeated the dame, in a tone which expressed surprise and ridicule; "what, you wish to pry into futurity, ha? Rest satisfied, child; you will be familiar with the evils that await you in this vale of trouble soon enough, without endeavouring to satisfy an overweening curiosity respecting them."

"Evils did you say?" now questioned the half-frightened girl; "what evils shall I have to encounter? Do pray relate them all, that I may take care, if possible, to avoid them."

"No greater *evils* may possibly fall to your lot in this life than those which we

are

re all subject to; for suffering is the lot of humanity."

"There!" exclaimed Miss Jeannette, in a whimpering tone, "I knew she would tell me of nothing but troubles and crosses; and I declare I've met with nothing else ever since I came into this nasty old castle, when I left my old playfellow, Georgy ap Jenkins, behind me in the beautiful vale of Llangollin."

"Well, Miss, now let me question her a bit," said the servant in a half-whisper; "perhaps she'll be more civiller to me, because I'm a man, look you," advancing on tiptoe towards the dame as he spoke, and beginning with—"Pray, good woman, can you tell me who it was that stole my *watch*?"

"Indeed I cannot," was the cool and laconic reply to this ingenious question.

"Why I was told that you had lived long enough in the world to know every thing, and now not to be able to tell me who

who it was that stole my watch! Come," he continued, in a coaxing tone, "be civil enough now to accommodate us with a little of your experience, and we will all pay what you ask in reason, look you."

"Alas! young man, *experience* is an article which no one thinks of value unless dearly purchased, and I question, if I were even to offer mine gratis, whether you would be inclined to accept it."

"This is very curious!" retorted the disappointed Thomas. "Then you wont tell me who is the thief that stole my watch, after all, though I wouldn't mind giving you the value of *half-a-crown* for the intelligence."

"My good young people," replied the dame, now tired of their absurdity, "you are in an error both in regard to yourselves and me. Can you in reality be so devoid of sense and reason as to suppose that, because it has pleased Providence to prolong my life beyond the usual span, that he has also gifted me with supernatural abilities?

No, no; all that I may be supposed to know more than other people, is only by a lengthened experience, which enables me to draw conclusions from events which are produced by such and such causes; by which means I am enabled to judge that what has once been, will eventually occur again, while there is an unerring immutability that leads us on to eternity." Here she ceased speaking, for a vision that looked beyond this world now engaged her thoughts; but soon recollecting herself, she continued—"Let me therefore advise you to banish all superstitious notions, which are not only foolish, but wicked, from your minds; while you may rest assured, that there exists not a human being who is permitted to explore the hidden paths of futurity, or, in other words, to foretell that which is to come."

"Then you are no *fortuneteller* after all?" questioned the young man, but little edified by the dame's discourse, though he had extended his eyelids to their utmost limits

limits all the while she was speaking; "and I have comed all this way for no earthly thing, but to find that you can tell me nothing at all about my watch!"

"Not exactly so, I hope," she mildly replied, "since I should think you would carry away a small portion of wisdom with you, by being convinced that, however artful people may impose upon the credulity of the young and ignorant, by pretending to make particular discoveries through the medium of spells, charms, &c. they are no wiser than their simple proselytes, and that there is no such being as a *fortuneteller*, taken in its literal sense, in the world."

This, though apparently directed towards the man, was meant as a lesson for the girls also, who soon shewed they understood it, by the conscious confusion that overspread their countenances; this the good dame observing, in order to prevent them from blushing any longer at the impropriety of their own conduct, for it was

ot her axiom that, in order to convince a young mind, it is necessary to depress it, she demanded how far they had walked, and in what part of the country they dwelt?

Miss Jeannette, wishing in some measure to atone for the error she had been guilty of, in so totally mistaking the character of the person whom she had thus rudely broken in upon, immediately answered that she was on a visit about a mile on the other side of the neighbouring mountain, with her aunt and uncle, at Ap-Howel Castle.

"Your uncle then is sir Howel Ap-Howel? I have heard his name before, but I was ignorant that I had a neighbour of his consequence so near me; so you see," added she, smiling, "that I do not exactly '*know every thing*."

"I am sure I beg your pardon for this intrusion, and I hope——"

"Oh, no offence, child, only do not in future believe in *fortunetellers;* and now go, and make the best of your way over the mountain lest it be too late for you to reach

reach home in safety;" so saying, she nodded a good-night, and they departed.

Scarcely had the party taken their leave, than Frederick, who had been an attentive listener to all that had passed, flew up to the dame; his eyes dancing with delight, and seizing her withered hand, he exclaimed—"Oh, dear mammy!" an appellation he had acquired from Love, "do you know that sir Howel Ap-Howel, of Howel Castle, is certainly my uncle also? I have never yet seen him, but I have heard an hundred times that a gentleman of that name and title married my aunt."

"Ay, indeed, my dear boy!" ejaculated the dame, "this is a fortunate circumstance, if you are correct in what you say; and Heaven grant you may, for it will save us a world of trouble."

The neighbouring mountain which, since his residence in this secluded spot, had bounded Frederick's steps, could not now bound his imagination; for beyond it he looked for liberty, and with it happiness

in the bosom of his family; and every hour that he was now constrained to measure this impediment with his eye, he deemed an age, since he was not permitted to surmount its summit.

The dame, almost as eager as her favoured guest for his emancipation from his present abode, at length determined that he and Love should, the next day, set out for Perryn's cottage, in order to request his attendance immediately; or it was probable they would have to wait for his regular visit, which would be a loss of three or four days. This, in the present emergency, would prove a serious concern, she thought; for her heart was well calculated to judge of the cruel anxiety which the friends of such a child must labour under for his loss. Early, therefore, the next morning, old Perryn was summoned by the youthful messengers; and having received his travelling credentials from the dame herself, he set out with a willing heart,

heart, though faltering foot, for Ap-Howel Castle.

To have kept pace with the impatience of the trio for his return, their messenger must have equalled the swift-winged Mercury; but as poor old Perryn inherited none of his qualities at the present day, whatever he might have boasted in his youth, to reckon the hours till he hobbled back again, and to guess at the answer he should receive, employed the mind of each, when scarcely a word was uttered to break the silence which reigned around. The only interruption given to their meditations arose from Frederick, who, urged by his impatience as the day declined, now and then made a leap to the door, in order to see if he could divine aught of Perryn on his return. But the old man came not; still the idea of beholding him was not relinquished till the sun was fast sinking behind the surrounding rocks, and the shades of night assembled quick in the horizon.

Day was again ushered in with the same urthen of tremulous fears, hopes, and vishes, which had agitated the bosoms of the harmless inhabitants of the rocky cabin the preceding one; and again the prospect of cruel suspense stared them in the face, unless the early return of Perryn should banish it. The goats had already been milked, and again been driven forth to pasture, the morning's repast ushered in, and the females just began to turn their drowsy wheels, when Frederick, whose every sense was particularly on the alert, declared that he heard voices in the glen below. In an instant both he and Love were at the door to reconnoitre; but owing to the projecting points of the intervening rocks, nothing extraordinary met their view. Still, although they could distinguish no one, they were convinced that more than one person was approaching, as the sound of human voices swelled upon their ears; when, after a few minutes further attention, they perceived two strangers climbing

climbing the ascent to their cabin, attended by old Perryn hobbling in the rear.

With starting eyes, and a heart throbbing with pulsations, that would have puzzled the most learned pupil of Æsculapius, did Frederick continue to look down upon the strangers as they slowly advanced up the broken pathway; but owing to the stooping position of both, as they proceeded up the steep, it was impossible for him to distinguish the features of either, till nearly arrived on a level with the spot on which he was standing; when memory, ever faithful to the image of a friend, gave to his view, in the figure nearest to him, the lineaments of his beloved uncle; but in the gentleman who accompanied him, he was destined to behold a stranger.

Rapid as the winged bird, when it darts into the parent nest to avoid the ravenous beak of its pursuers, so darted the harrassed boy into the arms that now expanded to receive him, while the smothered cry of *uncle* burst from his lips, for it was in-

deed sir Hugh Singleton, whom Perryn's extraordinary message had brought to the cabin. The joy of both parties in thus recognizing each other was too eloquent to vent itself in words—*tears* only could give utterance to the satisfaction that resulted to each at this ecstatic moment—a moment which again gave to the arms of sir Hugh Singleton the adopted child, whose loss he had so long and so lamentably deplored, and to the happy Frederick that satisfaction for which he had so long mourned in vain.

As soon as this *joy of grief*, as Ossian so finely expresses it, had a little subsided, sir Hugh held his nephew at some distance from him, in order to examine if he was identically the same Frederick of whom he had been so long bereft, and to convince himself whether he had undergone any material alteration in his person during the many hardships which he must have endured; but fortunately the examination proved much in his favour. He

was

was become considerably taller than he was at quitting Myfod Vale; and since his residence in the cabin, *Content*, the handmaid of health, had again strewn her roses over his late pallid cheek; whilst air, exercise, and his plain, but wholesome food, had given strength to his limbs, brilliancy to his eyes, and a muscular boldness to his whole frame. To have again found him in sound health and limb, was far beyond the uncle's hopes; and he now embraced him with increased satisfaction, whilst his heart overflowed with thanksgivings to that Providence who had thus in safety restored him to his arms; and as he felt the now-happy boy resting on his bosom, felicity, the purest felicity, was his; nor could the addition of a *dukedom*, much as sir Hugh Singleton had been taught to venerate *titles*, at that moment have added to his satisfaction.

Raising his head at length from that breast where he had reclined in a delirium of delight, Frederick observed his young

companion still standing by his side, an astonished spectator of the foregoing scene; when gently disengaging himself from arms that still seemed fond to encircle him, he snatched the hand of the wan-stricken girl, and presenting her to his uncle, exclaimed, half wild with joy—"This is my first preserver, dear sir; and now let us make haste into the cottage, and I will introduce you to the other, whom I shall love dearly as long as I live."

"Indeed, my dear Frederick," questioned sir Hugh, smiling, "I hope the object on which you have so hastily placed your affections will do credit to your taste?"

"Oh, you shall see, you shall see," cried the happy boy, dragging his uncle along with one hand, while he held Love by the other, regardless of the stranger, who, taking no part in the drama, followed mechanically, as they proceeded to enter the cabin.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

"MAMMY, dear mammy!" shouted Frederick, as he pressed through the narrow aperture which constituted the entrance to this lowly abode, without losing his hold on either of his companions; "mammy, dear mammy! I have brought you somebody, whom I am sure you will be glad to see, and who will love you as much as I do!"

"Ay, indeed! well, it is something to make conquests at my time of life; but I am afraid, my boy, you promise too much," replied the dame, as she rose from the side of her little peat-fire to welcome the strangers she saw approaching, who, struck by her appearance, could only stand and gaze upon the singular-looking figure before them. To their imagination, she looked rather

rather like the being of some other world than an inhabitant of this.

When sir Hugh was aroused from the surprise which had taken possession of his faculties, by his nephew's leading him nearer to this extraordinary personage, and crying—"This, dear mammy, is my kind good uncle, sir Hugh Singleton, come to fetch me home again himself."

"I am sincerely glad of it, my child," answered she; "and, as you say, I am exceedingly rejoiced to see him on such an errand; yet while I feel happy in his visit, I am almost sorry for the occasion of it, since it will go to deprive me of a very lively and intelligent companion, whose society has almost made me, at the age of an hundred, in love with the world again. But go thy ways, my boy; it were a shame even to indulge the wish of condemning a bud of such noble promise to the sterile society of a superannuated old woman—go thy ways therefore, my child," added she, spreading at the same time her shrivelled

velled hands over his curling locks, "and may *God's blessing* go with thee!"

Frederick now seized the hands that were extended over him as she uttered her benediction; and while he affectionately pressed them to his lips, murmured, with a tremulous voice and tearful eye cast towards his uncle, that he hoped he should soon see her again.

"Certainly," was kindly responded by sir Hugh, "we shall for the present go no farther than Castle Ap-Howel, whence it will be easy for you to visit your benefactress; and believe me, I shall be equally eager with yourself, my dear Frederick, to see her again, and to thank her as I ought for her unparelleled kindness towards you."

Sir Hugh Singleton, after having ineffectually used every endeavour to unite the clue which had been broken by his nephew's escape from the gipsies, almost in despair gave up all hope of being able to retrace him; and thinking to divert the chagrin which devoured him, he determined

mined upon making a visit to his sister, whom he had not seen since her marriage, and accordingly crossed the principality for that purpose. A week had scarcely passed since his arrival at Castle Ap-Howel, when he was agreeably surprised by the sudden appearance of old Perryn, fraught with the intelligence for which he had so long panted, and which induced him, accompanied by sir Howel ap Howel, to set out immediately for the cabin in the ravine.

Frederick was now introduced in form to his new relative, who embraced and congratulated him upon his restoration to his friends; when nothing now remained to detain them, he took an affectionate leave of the dame, and assuring Love, who scarcely knew whether to laugh or cry, that he would shortly see her again, with a heart half-sorrowing, half-rejoicing, turned his back upon the dear little cabin which had sheltered him in his adversity, and escorted by his friends, soon reached Ap-Howel Castle.

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To the generality of men, however great may be their ardour for the antique, an *old woman*, though commonly ranked in that class, would prove no curiosity; and more particularly one so ancient as the dame of the rocky cabin. But in this singular instance sir Hugh Singleton was an exception. The very appearance of this ancient female in such a desolate place, was calculated for a first-sight impression. Tall, thin, and scarcely bending under her weight of years, her figure had something imposing, if not commanding in it; while a pair of dark eyes, which at times shot forth a portion of their wonted fires, as they "twinkled like stars through the thin mist," and gave notice of the intelligence which reigned within, in spite of Time, who

> "Shew the wrinkles as they lie
> Insiduous in their furrows dark,
> And deeply stamp the envious mark—
> The mark indelible—which Fate
> Indents, to note our mortal date."

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The language too in which she had expressed herself, he observed, though possessing something rather quaint and short, was above mediocrity, and denoted her worthy of conversation. Should he then, who had spent so many hours of his life in searching for specimens of the antique, now neglect an opportunity of deciphering antiquity's self, when it was so immediately within his reach?—"No," he repeated, as these sentiments passed through his mind, on his return to the castle; "I will extend my visit here, in order to question this singular personage a little on the 'tales of the times of old,' and hear her relate 'the deeds of days of other years."

Thus thinking, the curious baronet was not long in putting his design in execution; and frequent were the visits, and some of them stolen ones, for fear of ridicule, which he made to this object of his contemplation; and could what some have advanced against the sex be true, namely, *that vanity is never dead in woman*,

man, the ancient dame might have plumed herself upon making no inconsiderable conquest, after completing a century; for, depend upon it, this was the first female with whom the phlegmatic sir Hugh Singleton ever indulged stolen interviews.

At first the dame, cautious and reserved like our first fair mother, would not *unsought be won*; for it was long since she had held converse with any human being out of her own cabin, the friendly Perryn excepted, and she now felt an insuperable objection to admit a stranger to her confidence. But the plea which her present suitor held in behalf of his nephew, towards whom she had acted so benevolent a part, added to his own suavity of manners, not only gained him free admittance to her hearth, but obtained for him a share of her confidence also, and a portion of her esteem.

During these visits many subjects of peculiar interest were started and discussed with intelligence; when carried away by the pleasure arising from the novelty of a rational

rational conversation, she seemed to feel a renewal of that spirit which had so long lain dormant and repressed, when a general communicativeness would take place of her common taciturnity. At such times as these, she would be led to speak of herself in a casual manner, till at length she was prevailed upon, by the rhetoric of her new friend, to give him her history at length, which, after prefacing in the following words, she began:—

"Many, many years ago, sir Hugh Singleton, so many, that I have almost forgotten times, dates, nay, the very seasons themselves, as they rolled by, had not the calendar of nature reminded me that Spring regaled me with the sight and fragrant scent of her sweetest flowers—that in Summer, I am as it were reanimated with the vivifying heat—whilst Autumn, with his changing leaf, warns me to prepare for the approach of Winter, who follows in his rear; and *winter*, dark, cheerless, solitary winter of the year, like that of age, points only

only to the *tomb*, of all that is left behind! So many years, I say, it is since, indulging a dislike rooted in particular causes, I took a dislike to the world, and quitting it entirely, have existed as a solitary inhabitant.

"The first-born child of parents who enjoyed the happy medium in life, prayed for by the eloquent psalmist, when he says, '*give me neither poverty nor riches*,' I was alike the idol of both father and mother, who fancied they beheld in me, from the first dawnings of reason, symptoms of a more than common understanding. My infant smile was regarded by them as beaming with intelligence; and when I crowed in my nurse's arms, it was considered as fine a piece of oratory as if uttered by a Cicero or a Demosthenes. In consequence of my understanding, as they believed, continuing to expand as I became older, it was agreed that I should receive an education calculated to improve it; a thing rather uncommon for females in those days, and from which I may, in

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all probability, date the origin of my wayward destiny.

"Preparatory to the making me a learned personage, I was suffered to commence my academical noviciate almost as soon as I could walk, under the superintending eye of my mother, at a village school, where

> 'Embowered in trees, and hardly known to Fame,
> There dwelt, in lowly shades and mean attire,
> A matron old, whom we schoolmistress name.'

who was well satisfied to rank me in her 'fairy throng;' and so well did I profit by her sage instructions, and so early learned to con my 'book of stature small,' that at the age when most children would begin their alphabet, I was pronounced a prodigy in the art of reading, and as constantly held up as an example for all the urchins in the school to imitate.

"Alas! well do I remember, though ages appear to have rolled over me since, and more recent events have faded from my

my memory, the glow of proud delight that thrilled my infant bosom, when receiving this 'pittance small of praise,' from one I then thought 'the greatest wight on ground.'

"Impressions formed at an early period of our lives, when the mind, like an uncontaminated sheet, is open to receive them, are generally indelible. Thus, from being constantly told that I was a pattern for emulation, I began to indulge the same idea with my parents, and became convinced in my turn, that I certainly was in possession of talents far superior to those of my contemporaries.

"To cultivate then these pre-eminent talents, as I became older, constituted my chief delight; and having sufficiently astonished my village instructress with the depth of my erudition, I was placed under the care of one superior in the elements of knowledge, some miles distant from home. Here, if not receiving altogether such high encomiums as I had been accustomed to,

yet I frequently bore the palm of victory from my youthful competitors in the paths of diligence; and many were the rewards, consisting of a new pen, a pencil, or—ecstatic remembrance!—*a gilt book*, from the hands of my preceptress, with which I closed my annual career.

"Happy days of peace, innocence, and delight! too soon you vanished, leaving me nothing that could be termed an equivalent for your flight.

"To study, and exert every nerve in the acquirement of knowledge, was now become my greatest enjoyment. Books were every thing to me; and no famished Indian who traverses the barren desert in search of food, ever devoured the luxurious meal which Providence at length places before him, with more eagerness than I did the contents of every volume I could lay my hands upon. Objects so fascinating, were meat, drink, and, in short, the sustenance of life to me; and many were the bribes offered, and frequent were

the

the *petits* schemes put in practice to get them into my possession; but when once obtained, the luxurious banquet of perusing the secreted volume was more delicious to me than the feasting with an emperor. You will feel inclined perhaps to inquire what constituted my juvenile studies, thus purloined, and as secretly pursued? Miscellaneous they certainly were, and perhaps not very choice in their contents, as I read indiscriminately every thing that came in my way, from the fairy tale to the high-flown ancient romance; and had not these been tempered with a portion of history, a little poetry, with the Religious Courtship, Pilgrim's Progress, and a few moral plays, I might have been led to suppose that I could have taken my flight through the air in a beautiful car drawn by swans, or have fancied myself a captive beauty in the court of Ptolemy king of Egypt.

"At the happy age of sixteen, when a female has a partial claim to the rights of

womanhood, whilst she is not reckoned too old to enjoy the innocent playfulness of the girl, I quitted my school, greatly embellished in personal advantages, according to the opinion of my indulgent parents, as well as highly improved in mental acquirements; and though I was not reckoned strictly handsome, a thing of no concern, as the beauty of the face had ever been considered below my wise consideration, yet I was allowed to possess a figure which was not without attractions, while my manner, having received a polish from education, very unusual, as I before observed, for young persons in those days, was acknowledged to be very agreeable. I had read a good deal, possessed a very retentive memory, and knew how to adapt my conversation to the capacity of others; this, with a certain *gaieté de cœur*, rendered me sufficiently attractive, and it was the fashion in our little world to think every thing I said carried weight with it; and in a short time I was considered not only

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the *orator*, but the *oracle* of the village also.

"Delightful season of my youth! when every circumstance possessed a charm to summon happiness, again I have to apostrophize your fleeting hours! Why, oh why, is this happy period of our existence suffered so soon to pass away? is it because the short-lived happiness of this world cannot be put in competition with that to come, whither we are hastening in order to dwell in bliss eternal!

CHAPTER XI.

"THOUGH possessing a sufficient degree of complaisance and good-nature in my composition to tolerate my inferiors in mental acquirements, still I could not bring myself to select them for my acquaintance or friends; and thus I began, almost imperceptibly, to step out of that rank in life which Providence appeared to have assigned me; and though by nature neither proud nor ambitious, yet my spirit, involuntarily as it were, searched out kindred minds that could assimilate with my own, while it refused to mingle with the every-day characters around me.

"To succeed in this point, it was necessary to cast my eyes upon those in a superior station in life to my own; it was there only that I could hope to meet with that degree

gree of intelligence, cultivation, and sentiment, which, by enabling them to join in the same pursuits, should obtain an interest in my heart. A friend thus gifted, in a circle so limited as my own, I could scarcely hope to discover; yet there was one in existence, whose disposition was perfectly congenial with my own, and whose friendship for me promised to be as lasting as the basis of taste and sentiment on which it was founded. But, alas! friendship, like love, is fleeting, and unstable as the visions of the night—the morning dawns, sleep vanishes, and nought remains of the ideal phantoms of our imaginations, but memory, cruel memory, who delights to reflect in time's circling glass the dreams of our earlier years.

"Scarcely had six months rolled over my head, after I had quitted school, when, on the eve of St. Valentine, a packet, bearing my address, was left at our door, and in which, upon breaking the seal which confined the envelop, I discovered a beau-

tiful clasp, enriched with a lock of curiously-plaited brown hair. This elegant little present I found accompanied by some equally-elegant verses; but instead of being love's messengers, which I at first imagined, I saw, upon perusal, that they were offerings at the shrine of friendship only, and came, as the signature at the bottom testified, from a young lady, who expressed herself desirous of becoming a candidate for the honour of my acquaintance.

"To be thus distinguished was exceedingly flattering to my self-love, and more particularly so as the petitioner for my regard moved in a much higher sphere than myself, being the only daughter of a rich yeoman, who had been in the habit of writing *gent.* at the termination of his name. In this young lady I hoped to meet with those accomplishments I panted for in a friend; and as I knew much pains and expence had been lavished on her education as well as my own, a singular as well as similar coincidence in those times, I entertained

tained no doubt of being fully gratified in my expectations.

"No time was then lost in returning an appropriate answer to this elegant valentine, and some trifling memento was also conveyed back on my part, indicative of the pleasure with which I received her proposal. These preliminaries settled, an interview soon took place between us, when, equally pleased with the perfections which each fancied they beheld in the other, we formed so strict a bond of amity, that, like the Hermia and Helena of Shakespeare, we shared sweet counsel together, and

'chid the hasty-footed Time
For parting us.'

"To obviate this inconvenience as much as possible, the parents of my friend gave me so general an invitation, that I became at length almost an inhabitant of the same mansion, where her joys,

her occupations, and her pleasures, became mine; alike pursuing the same object—

'Both warbling of one song—both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate;
— — — — — —
So with two seeming bodies, but one heart,'

did we continue to cement our friendship, till my wayward fate, as if envious of such felicity, stepped in to undermine it.

"I have told you that my friend was the only *daughter* of her parents, but not their only child. Alicia Everard had two brothers, both older than herself, and both alike the objects of her tenderest affections; but during my three years intimacy with their sister, I had never seen either, both being absent from home, though on very different pursuits; the youngest bearing arms in a foreign country, while the eldest, who was destined to succeed his father in the patrimonial estate, which was deemed of sufficient value to exempt him from the irksomeness

irksomeness of attending to any profession, had been, during the time above-mentioned, on a visit to his maternal grandfather in Ireland.

"The darling of this doting relative, by whom he had been cherished from his infancy, became at length so necessary to the happiness of his latter years, that he could not endure he should quit him, even for the shortest period; repeatedly urging, that all the return which he expected from him, for kindnesses lavished on his youth, was, that he should remain to close his eyes; and as that period had been long expected, year had succeeded year without his wished-for return.

"The 'king of terrors,' so long looked for, but who will come, *only when he will come*, at length thought proper to call upon the old gentleman, when his grandson, after having performed every filial duty towards his revered relative, and inherited a tolerable sum in addition to that bequeathed his brother and sister, quitted

Ireland for that home and those relatives he had so anxiously, yet so vainly wished to embrace.

"Had any other occasion than that of the death of a near relation been the cause of conducting back the *heir* of the house of Everard, the event would, no doubt, have been marked by rejoicings appropriate to such an agreeable event; as it was, propriety demanded that they should receive him to their arms, and rejoice in silence. Congratulations flowed round on all sides upon so joyful an event, amid which were none more sincere than those proffered by his sister's chosen friend, who most sincerely rejoiced in the general hilarity that reigned around.

"In order to render home as attractive as possible to the young stranger, every variety of amusement was set on foot to afford him entertainment; and as Alicia could have no enjoyment unless I was with her, to have proposed going home at this crisis, would not only have carried the face

face of ingratitude with it, but would have been wholly impracticable; I therefore easily obtained permission from my parents to remain, no unwilling sharer in the scenes of pleasure by which I was surrounded.

"Not to weary you, sir Hugh, with a frivolous detail of my juvenile adventures, which, although in some measure interesting to the garrulity of age to relate, cannot be so to an individual to hear; I will therefore hasten to say, that these indulgent parents, in their eagerness to procure the immediate gratification of pleasure to their son, overlooked the consequences which might arise from two young people of different sexes being in the habits of such intimacy with each other. Upon these occasions it is rare but that one of the parties receives an impression from the fancied charms, whether real or imaginary, of the other, which engenders a passion, that, if unrequited, may go nigh to cost them the peace of their future lives; and such, I am grieved to say, through this

misplaced security, was the fate of the unfortunate and misguided Charles Everard.

"Born in a situation far above the humble Anne de Clifford, one in which he might have selected a partner for life amongst hundreds in his own sphere, why did his evil genius lead him to fix those affections on me, which had been so much happier bestowed elsewhere? and why was I fated, by his persevering passion, to wound my own heart, whilst I pierced that of his friends, by declaring my inability to make him a suitable return?

"To a person rather too much in the *embonpoint* for a young man of his age, Edgar Everard united a tolerably handsome face, whose only expression was characteristic of ease and good-humour. Unlettered as the boors on his grandfather's estate, except in the article of being able to write his own name, his sole occupation had been to eat and drink, hunt and shoot, with other rural employments; and when pursuing neither of these necessary qualifications,

fications, to gallop round the country as many miles in a day as his galloway would carry him. Added to these accomplishments, he was rough in his manners, and uncouth in his dialect, natural consequences of a mind so uncultivated; for having been considered as a model of perfection from his infancy in the eyes of his doting grandfather, it had never been deemed necessary to polish the one, or correct the other of these glaring defects—defects which remained invisible, while, from the gaiety of his natural temperament, he never failed to contribute towards the general hilarity of those around him; and he had been suffered, without contradiction, to run wild as the game he loved to pursue in his native wilds.

"As the *son* of my *benefactors*, since their kindness warranted them such to me—as the brother of my friend, I could have loved Edgar Everard; but to the forming a nearer connexion with him on my account, I felt an insurmountable repugnance.

nance. In vain I looked for that congeniality of taste, that union of sentiment between us, so necessary to form the basis of conjugal felicity—in vain I sought for that degree of superior talent, which I should have wished to find in one with whom I was destined to spend the period of my existence. Alas! these ingredients, so necessary to my happiness in a wedded life, were not blended in the being before me, and I found it impossible to tax my heart in his favour.—What," she continued, as if speaking to herself, "though it almost cost me my reason to break with a family thus beloved and revered, could I sacrifice my all of happiness? No!" she again uttered, in an inward tone, while her fixed eye and immovable posture gave notice that she saw nothing but the vision which she was retracing within — "no; they should not have exacted so great a sacrifice! Ah! how frequently does memory present to my mind's eye the last sad scene which passed between us! when the fond

fond mother, struck by the threatenings of the intemperate youth when he received my final refusal, besought me, with tears streaming down her cheeks, in pity to revoke my sentence, and make them happy—when the sister, her heart wrung to agony by the melancholy forebodings she experienced in regard to her brother, who, unaccustomed to control, knew not how in this instance to brook it, clung round my neck, imploring me not to abandon them—when Edgar himself, with lowering brow, sullen eye, and cheeks bloated with mortification, whilst their hectic tinge shewed the disdain with which they refused to receive the scalding tears ready to start, stood aloof in gloomy silence; whilst I, my bosom torn by a thousand conflicting emotions, in which esteem for my friends, pity for the object who had been the primary source of all this, and a consideration for my own happiness, struggled for supremacy, and I could scarcely be kept from fainting—oh! it was a scene which old Time, although he has so long flapped his wings over

over me, has never yet been able to waft from my remembrance.

"The consequences resulting from such an event as I have related, were such as might be expected. I could have made a sacrifice of every thing upon the combined altars of *gratitude* and *friendship* but that of myself, which religion, as well as sentiment, forbade. How could I, in the face of that Being who gave me life, vow to love, honour, and obey one who had not the power to command, even in a single point, the performance of my oath? Could I expect happiness in a state, whose very outset would have been marked by a profanation of its sacred rites? No, no; the thing was impossible; I was stedfast in my refusal to unite my fate with that of Edgar Everard, and we parted—*for ever!*

"From this unfortunate period, no communication whatever took place between the members of either family. Alicia remained as if dead to me; nor have I, since that memorable period, suffered the chasm made by such a breach in our friendship

friendship to be filled up. No, dear and regretted friend, *you* only were worthy to dwell in this heart; and though the inexorable tyrant has long swept you from the earth, that void which you formerly filled in my bosom, still remains as it did in thy life, *sacred to thy memory !*"

CHAPTER XII.

THE good dame feeling herself somewhat exhausted at the end of the foregoing chapter, signified her wish of postponing a further relation of the most striking events of her life, until her visitor should again honour her poor hut with his company. To this sir Hugh immediately agreed; but being impatient to learn all the wayward circumstances which could thus induce a person of her talents and understanding to bury herself alive in so desolate a spot, he was not long in returning

ing to his post, when she good-humouredly collected her retentive faculties, and resumed the thread of her story:—

"Secluded under my father's roof, to which I immediately returned, after the breach I have mentioned, I could have wished that in shutting out all the world, I could as finally have shut out all remembrance of it also. But it would not be; my sensibility had received a wound difficult to cicatrize, and memory, painful memory, would too frequently present me with visions of the past for me to expect tranquillity.

"From Alicia I had never heard since our separation; to common report, therefore, was I indebted for any intelligence that might reach me respecting the family of my friend; and from this source I soon learned that poor Edgar, in a paroxysm of passion, amounting almost to frenzy, had quitted his father's house—that he was gone no one knew whither, and that he was not expected to return. Ill-fated young

young man! how many hours of sorrowful commiseration has thy unhappy destiny cost me! yet, could I even have been permitted to foresee this unlucky event, I know not, under such peculiar circumstances, how I could have prevented it. This reflection is my only consolation, when, as now, I have to accuse myself of being the ruin of one, who, had not I been cast as a stumbling-block in his road to happiness, might have lived an honour to himself, and a comfort to his family.

"For a length of time after his sudden disappearance, nothing satisfactory transpired in regard to Edgar Everard. During this interval, some very material changes took place in my own family, which obliged me to quit the paternal roof, and in consequence to reside with a sister of my father's in a distant part of the kingdom. Here, as we mixed but little in society, and I had plenty of time for pursuing my favourite occupations, I again began to taste of peace, and from time to time

regained

egained a portion of my former vivacity;
when going with my aunt on a visit to
some friends in a neighbouring town, when
we were disturbed one day after dinner by
an unusual bustle in the street, and flying
with the rest of the company to the win-
dow, in order to ascertain the cause, I be-
held a poor wretch surrounded by the offi-
cers of justice, who were dragging him
along in order to inflict some degree of
punishment upon him for disturbing the
peace. The shivering creature had neither
shoe nor stocking to his foot, no hat to
cover his head, and the rest of his garments
exhibited a correspondent degree of want
and wretchedness.—'Poor fellow!' I eja-
culated, as he approached, 'what a miser-
able outcast art thou! for to judge by thy
appearance, scarcely one of the most abject
upon earth would care to own thee for his
companion;' when, just as he reached the
window at which I was stationed, some-
thing caused him to elevate his uncovered
head, when I discovered, merciful Provi-
dence

dence! the countenance of *Edgar Everard!*

"Horror-struck at so appalling a sight, I sunk half-fainting upon the nearest seat. *His sister*, his *miserable parents*, rushed to my imagination, and even the unhappy youth himself became equally an object of my commiseration; for though I had found it impossible to love, yet I could not hate, and from the bottom of my heart could feel for, and commiserate his unhappy destiny.

"Exerting therefore every endeavour to overcome this unexpected shock, which had passed unnoticed, I was soon sufficiently recovered to appeal to the gentleman of the house in behalf of the unfortunate culprit, whom I confessed I knew — knew his excellent family, and implored him, if he had any influence with the magistrates, that he would use it in order to mitigate his sentence, and thus save the beloved brother of my friend from undergoing a public disgrace. Struck by the agitation of

of my manner, and convinced by the eagerness with which I entreated his assistance, that it must be a matter of consequence to me, he politely acceded to my request; he immediately hastened after the throng, and reached in time to prevent the dreaded exposure.

"Oh, Edgar, could I but as happily have prevented every subsequent evil that followed thee to thy grave, as I prevented this, what satisfaction would it have given me! but no, that was beyond my feeble efforts to achieve, and thou wert lost—lost to thyself and thy friends! But whether the green sod covered thee in thy 'narrow house,' or the blue wave rolled over thy head while thou sleptest below, was never known.

"For a length of time after this melancholy incident, I heard no more of Edgar Everard; it appeared from this period that he had vanished from the earth; he was gone no one knew whither, or even if he was in existence. Many were the inquiries

ries I privately hazarded respecting him; for believing myself the cause, though Heaven knows how innocently so, of his ruin, it was impossible for me to remain uninterested, when, after the lapse of several years, I learned the following particulars:—

"Flying in despair from his father's mansion, after the unlucky fracas I have related, he kept no measures with himself, but rushed headlong into every vice, till he became the degraded creature I last saw him. The patrimony which he inherited from his grandfather squandered, and entertaining too great a sense of propriety to appeal, degraded as he was, to his parents for more, he became in the end a very outcast from the haunts of man; but as he could not starve, and still entertained too much principle to rush unbidden into the presence of his Creator, he, as a means of simply obtaining a subsistence, at length entered as a seaman on board one of his majesty's ships of war destined

to

to foreign service. Here, through his contempt of all subordination, and indeed of life, he soon incurred the displeasure of his commanding officers, for which offence he was tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to be flogged. This punishment it was impossible his high spirit could brook; death in this instance he deemed preferable; and to hazard his life upon the cast of an escape, was no sooner thought of than put in execution. Vigilantly searching for an opportunity during the night, he quietly dropped down the ship's side; and being a vigorous swimmer, contrived to pass through the whole fleet, till he reached a transport, which was under sailing orders for the East Indies; and being in too exhausted a state, when taken on board, to give any account of himself, he was charitably consigned to a hammock, where he remained in peace till the anchor was weighed, and the sails set, to bear him at once from his oppressors and the *English shores.*

"From

"From this time vague reports only respecting the fate of Edgar Everard reached England. Some affirmed that he died on his passage, others that he had reached the vessel's destination, and had been seen and spoken with by those who knew him; but it was certain that he never again made his appearance in his native land, and was as certainly accounted as dead by all who retained any interest in his fate. Unhappy Edgar! how many times have I sighed over thy wayward destiny! and how frequently, when my heart has been wounded with pity for thy suffering friends, have I wished that our minds had been more in unison—that yours had been freed from the rust by which it was enveloped, and that mine had not received so high a polish; then we had met on equal terms—then we might together have enjoyed happiness; and I should not then, as I sometimes fearfully think, have been accessary to thy premature death."

Here the old lady's feelings, in spite

of the years that had passed to blunt them, became too poignant to permit her to proceed and begging sir Hugh to excuse her, said she would busy herself a little with her favourites, as she saw Love approaching, with Willey frisking beside her, and the remainder of the herd quietly following. She then wiped away a tear that stood twinkling in either eye, for want of power to roll down her furrowed cheek; and taking her crook-stick, after bidding farewell to her guest, she sallied forth to assist in serving the goats with their evening meal.

As early the next morning as propriety would admit, sir Hugh Singleton was again at the rocky cabin, so desirous was he of learning the sequel of the dame's history; for by that he should obtain a clue to the extraordinary love of retirement which she had so unequivocally evinced. That men, even from the sage Diogenes, who dwelt in a tub, down to the present day, had frequently secluded themselves from

from society, he well knew, but that a weak female should have put such a resolution into effect, he could scarcely have believed; and the farther she proceeded in her tale, the more ardent he became to solve the puzzling enigma.

The usual salutation having passed between them, sir Hugh took his station opposite the dame, whose countenance, deep furrowed by the iron finger of time, he loved to contemplate, when a flash of its former spirit provoked a smile, or the remembrance of "auld lang syne" produced the sympathetic tear. At such times the baronet, who possessed a soul attuned to nature's finest feelings, enjoyed her transient smile, and felt, when he saw the protruding tear, as if by bidding his own roll down his cheeks, he could have sent hers back to their hidden source, and spared the pang which caused it.

"I have now, sir Hugh," she began, "a reverse side of the picture to exhibit, in which perhaps you will deem me rightly

punished for the events which I described in the former; but I again repeat, in order to exonerate myself in that affair, that I held out no lures to entrap poor Edgar Everard—I gave him no encouragement, no reason to suppose that I would ever return his unhappy passion; and had I been fated to endure punishment on that account, the loss of his sister's confidence, with the countenance of his father, was retribution sufficient, as these were subjects of unabating sorrow and regret during the best part of my existence. But to proceed. Although I have said that I found it impossible to bestow my affections upon the ill-fated youth in question, I did not acknowledge that my heart was formed of adamant. No; Heaven knows it was a compound of all my sex's softness, and waited only to meet its kindred one to receive an indelible impression.

"In the same neighbourhood in which dwelt my aunt, dwelt also a Mr. L——, a gentleman of good family and independent

ent fortune. Having for some years buried both his father and mother, he, with a single sister, continued to inhabit the family mansion, and to keep up the same order of domestic arrangement which had been practised during their joint lives. With this young lady my aunt was upon visiting terms when I became her inmate, and with whom, in consequence, I also formed an acquaintance—*friendship*, according to my acceptation of the word, and I had parted, beyond the power of any casual connexion to recall; *acquaintance*, therefore, was the only term by which I acknowledge the intimacy subsisting between this lady and myself. During the frequent visits which took place in our circle, I was in the constant habit of meeting L——; and although perhaps he did not possess that degree of personal beauty usually ascribed to a hero of romance, that to me, who ever thought beauty in a man his least attraction, was of no consideration; it was the superior qualities of the mind

alone that I regarded, and those he was allowed to possess in an eminent degree. It was therefore not long before a sympathetic cordon, a discovery of that which each approved in the other, appeared to draw us insensibly together, and caused us to unite in ourselves that peculiar charm in conversation which we in vain sought to discover elsewhere. The same tastes, the same sentiments, and the same opinions, constantly guided both—both equally attached to reading, and both enthusiastic admirers of Nature in all her forms; whether she was clothed in summer bloom, or put on the wild and gloomy terrors of the winter storm, to us she was equally the object of our fondest contemplations; and whether to search for her hidden treasures in their deepest concealment, or study the widely-expanded flower under our feet, provided we could communicate our respective ideas on the subject by which we were engrossed, afforded us alike ineffable satisfaction.

"Could

"Could it be in the nature of things, think you, sir Hugh, for two people thus gifted with minds so congenial, and who were in the constant habits of associating with each other, to prevent the passion first grafted upon approbation, from growing into esteem, and thence ripening into *love;* and this independently of any personal attraction which might have acted as an auxiliary in the cause? But though I previously hinted that L—— could not, on account of his features, be called an Adonis, nor in his figure have rivalled the Apollo Belvidere, yet he possessed an intelligent countenance, with eyes highly expressive of that sensibility which reigned within, a person of graceful demeanour, and a suavity of manner which reigned conspicuous in every action. Thus, while the natural disposition of Edgar Everard and my own, like oil and water, could never assimilate, that of L—— seemed governed by some active principle, some magnetic influence, which secretly impelled

him towards me, and securely rivetted *my destiny*.

"To spare you, however, the recital of an old woman's love tale, three parts of a century back, I will only say that time, instead of exhausting, appeared only to strengthen the attachment we evinced towards each other, whilst he pointed to a perspective of happiness, which could end but with our lives. Reposing on this idea, I gave him my whole heart—a heart replete with every domestic and maternal affection —one that would have imolated itself for his benefit—one that could have doted on his children—one that could have—But I rave; and even at this distant period, when all are swept away, I seem to have forgotten that *love's* eventful fever ought not to inflate these dried and whithered veins!

"Well, sir, the acquaintance between this gentleman and myself glided smoothly on; and although I believed myself sufficiently clear-sighted to have read his inmost soul, yet hoodwinked by my affection

tion for the traitor, I suffered the predominant passion in his bosom to escape my view. The passion to which I allude was *Avarice, vile hag!* with wrinkled visage, and extended claws, ready to grasp what she can never enjoy; to her I owe the catastrophe of my life, and to avoid her votaries, have wasted a long existence in solitude and seclusion. But to resume my subject. I have already informed you that my sphere in life was comparatively humble; consequently neither my family nor fortune were upon a par with those of L——; but where an attachment firm as ours was supposed to exist, who would question such minor considerations? Not *I*, had the advantages of wealth rested on my side; and thus thinking, could I have imagined such meanness on his? But I was mistaken. As the time approached in which our nuptials were to have been solemnized, with a presentiment of horror, I observed that he became tardy in his visits, absent in conversation, dull in his

attentions, and at times apparently lost in such total abstraction, that it was impossible for me not to have remarked so visible a change—a change which struck daggers to my heart, and of which, though I demanded the cause, I never complained.

"A few incoherent excuses, expressing sorrow for his conduct, which you men, sir Hugh, know so well how to invent by way of palliatives, when, by your wiles, you may have ruined the peace, or perhaps endangered the very existence, of a confiding female, with as many additional words, muttered in a low tone, regarding the additional expences incurred in a marriage state, were all that hollow struck upon my ear; and at once the whole mystery of behaviour so extraordinary was discovered.

"And could the man whom I, by deeming faultless, had almost worshipped, conduct himself in a manner so base as this? —could a mind, which I had believed so noble, so enlightened, harbour so grovelling a senti-

a sentiment as the one which he had, the preceding moment, to my astonished senses, displayed? were questions that would intrude, when conviction boldly answered he was that man; while it also convinced me that his mind was not the exalted one I took it for: hence the ligament which had hitherto so firmly bound us together, was now for ever snapped asunder.

CHAPTER XIII.

"FROM this dark hour," continued the dame, as she proceeded in her relation, while the attentive sir Hugh remained an untired auditor, "which shed its baleful influence over my dancing expectations, and crushed them altogether, I never again saw L——; he was no longer in my eyes the perfect being that I had delighted to fancy; the outside of the fruit might still wear a tempting aspect, but I had discovered a

canker within, which was gnawing at the core, rendering it loathsome, and of no farther value.

"Here then was another chasm in the path of existence—a chasm whose gaping fissure was not likely to be closed so soon as the former might have been; for however tough one may find the links in the chain of friendship, the adamantine folds of love are still harder to sever, and when once divided, never again unite.

"To remain in a country where every step I took, every scene I visited, served only as a memento to remind me of the happiness I had lost, was impossible; wishing therefore to be 'wide as the poles asunder' from one who had rendered these scenes thus hateful to me, I quitted my relative, and went to reside with a cousin on my mother's side, who dwelt in a far distant county. But thus to sever, thus to part with a kindred soul, whose thoughts, words, and actions, seemed but the counterpart of my own, cost me dear; yet I survived

survived it—survived to linger many a tedious year the shuttlecock of what is termed genteel society, before I quitted it, and by so doing, regained my peace.

"You, sir Hugh, who stand too high in the estimate of fashionable life for the paltry shafts of malignity, hurled from narrow minds, to reach, must be incapable of appreciating the heart-wounding irritation created by their venomous touch. To this species of torment I was, alas! but too sensible for my own repose; and to the already-lacerated heart I had but too frequently cause to add the mortifying humiliation of the mind.

"The relative with whom I had a second time taken up my abode, received me rather on account of my appearance, and reputed accomplishments, than for any affection that might be supposed to exist between us on account of our consanguinity. It had hitherto been the study of her life to obtain a place amongst what was called the first society in the

place

place where she resided, and to have opened her doors to receive one who might have disgraced her in this point, however near or dear the connexion, would have been impossible. Delighted, therefore, when she found that my manners and conversation might rather be regarded as auxiliaries towards her obtaining a firmer footing in these coveted societies, than retarding her from them, without mercy was I constantly dragged into her coteries, when, proud of exhibiting her accomplished young friend, she took care that I should not hide my talents under a bushel, by assuring one person that I understood this, and another that, till I was shortly distinguished by the appellation of the *learned lady;* and as such, instead of maintaining my place, as a quiet, unobtrusive member of society, which was my only wish, I was violently dragged forth, and exhibited to public view, with all my talents in *terrorem* hung round about me.

"This, as might be expected, was soon the

the cause of frightening from me all the timid of my own sex, and the truly sensible of the other; for however a highly-talented man may prefer a woman capable of maintaining a rational conversation to a fool, still he utterly despises a pedantic one; and rather than enter the lists with one so denominated, he retires from her in disgust. If at any time, when wishing to fly from past events I endeavoured to forget I was a solitary communer with my own thoughts, I endeavoured at some degree of familiarity, by sliding into conversation, in a few minutes it would sink with the observation, if I chanced to dissent from an advanced opinion of—'We are not learned enough to cope with you in an argument,' when all would become silent; or whenever I happened to be addressed by any of this good lady's friends, it was generally with the prelude of—'Pray, ma'am, you that *know every thing*, can you tell us so and so?' while a satirical leer, or a sly touch of the elbow, accompanied the question.

tion. This convinced me that I was only held up as an object of ridicule and disgust, for possessing airs which they themselves falsely attributed to my charge. You will perhaps say that it required no great effort on my part to convince these good people, that if my mind was in a higher state of cultivation than those of the generality of my sex, I had no desire to blazon it abroad, and could have been content to have substituted their common chit-chat for solid reasoning, and have smiled at it into the bargain, provided it had been attended with ease and good-humour. True, I answer; but wherefore take that trouble? The double springs of *love* and *friendship*, which had hitherto supported my buoyant prospects, were snapped asunder, and with them fled my natural energies. Of what consequence to me now was the opinion of these people? I did not intend to draw upon them for happiness originating in sisterly affection, heart-touching endearments, and unwearied

ried attentions—articles in which they were bankrupts; they might indeed have afforded me the shadow of these blessings, but having once enjoyed the substance, it was not easy to substitute so flimsy an apology. But this was not the only way in which my *amour-propre* was destined to be wounded, and I was soon convinced how meanly the narrow mind, contemning those acquirements it cannot reach, will stoop to worship the adventitious gifts of fortune —*gifts* which they all hope to obtain, and which, though even in the possession of another, holds out an irresistible charm to lure these sons of Mammon to their glittering standard. Yet, after the painful conviction I had once experienced of the power of riches over the human mind, could I long regard the pointed neglect—the haughty frown—the supercilious sneer, of the gaudy ephemera of a day, as a source of evil? No; their buz passed harmless, and their sting was impotent; I felt them not; could the blasted oak, already

already riven by the lightning's tremendous flash, remain penetrable to the casual effects of the pattering hail storm?

"Thus situated, a cheerless existence was all that now remained to meet the coming years which Providence allotted me; and in their course, deprived of all my natural ties—holding no rank or near affinity with any one in the scale of created beings—the tenderest and best affections of my youthful heart thrown back upon my hands, at a period when I felt how endearing the title of *wife*, how rapturous the appellation of *mother*, would have been to my soul!—what, I say, had I to do with the buffettings of a contumelious world?—of what value were the smiles of the great to me, or of what consequence their frowns? Alike I disregarded both; and to quit a society in which I claimed no place, was now my sole concern. Dividing therefore the little property I had hitherto possessed, so insufficient to procure me happiness, amongst the few from whom I had casually

casually received some acts of kindness, I retired, poor and almost pennyless, to avoid the being again drawn into the vortex from which I had determined to escape, to a spot not far distant from my present habitation; where, surrounded by many of the dearest objects in nature, I learned more fully to appreciate her bounties, which never failed to draw forth the warmest effusions of my heart; and here, with her aid, and the labour of my hands, I have contrived, for many years, to procure all I wanted in this life—a subsistence.

"Still, so unstable is every thing in this world, that even this solitude, so warmly courted, and so pertinaciously adhered to, I found, after a lapse of a few years, was no protection against the malevolence of my own species. When Time, in his flight, had scattered snows over my temples, and traced with his leaden finger some of the furrows that indent my cheeks, the peace I was beginning to enjoy was again

again ruffled by the inquisitiveness of those who pretend to measure the happiness of others by their own standard. Many presumed to wonder how I could live in such an out-of-the way place; whilst others set themselves to guess how I could contrive to live at all without any apparent means, save the work of my own hands, and the produce of my goats? Alas! they little knew how small a quantity of nutriment serves to support nature, or in how small an estimation the luxuries of the body were held by such a disposition as mine. All I had ever panted for in this life had been the possession of a kindred soul, and I found it, but so encrusted with the dark coat of *avarice*, that its concealed lustre could no longer shine for me, and losing that, all minor gratifications became extinct.

"From my casually benefitting the poor people who came within my vortex, either to ask advice, to complain of sickness, or to relate their domestic disputes, with the simple

simple arguments, or such assistance as came within my power, some of them were so weak as to attribute the effects which sometimes followed to supernatural means; and as the generality of the people in this part of the country are both credulous and superstitious, I began, according to these surmises, to be regarded with an evil eye; and if at any time I made an attempt to step over the threshold of a neighbouring cottage, the infallible guard against witchcraft—*a horseshoe*, nailed across, would rise up to bar my entrance; or if once in, and I was invited to sit down, half a dozen pins would instantly warn me that the same precautions had been taken with the seat as with the threshold. Disgusted as much by their ingratitude as by their ignorance, I determined at once to quit every vestige of society, and by burying myself in this nook, and at the same time carefully avoiding all intercourse with my fellow-beings, enjoy that repose I had so long and so earnestly coveted.

"In

upon our heart, and then sink to everlasting night, I perceived my messenger descending the narrow sheepwalk that wound along the side of the ravine, and bearing a much larger bundle in his arms than he could have collected on my account. He was not long in reaching the spot where I was sitting, when, apparently somewhat fatigued with his walk, he made a halt, and, without uttering a syllable, deposited his burthen in my arms. Surprised at so unusual a circumstance in the conduct of Perryn, whom I had ever considered, though a faithful creature, as little more than an automaton, I proceeded to examine the contents of the mysterious mass in my possession, when, on opening the outside cover, which consisted of a kind of old cloak, I discovered a lovely sleeping cherub concealed within; in short, my own *Love*, whom you now behold an inhabitant of my poor dwelling, sir Hugh, and the sole companion of my extreme old age and dreary solitude.

"Whether

"Whether at this juncture my heart was not become so callous to the tender feelings of nature as I had imagined it, or whether the claims of infant innocence were more powerfully attractive than any thing which I had for years met with to call those feelings forth, I know not; but this much is certain, that I felt I could not refuse the protection and care which Perryn solicited for this unfortunate child; and when he spoke of her having been bereaved of her natural protectors—of her very existence being endangered by some mercenaries—of the necessity of concealment, with other *et-cetera*, my heart expanded; I clasped the infant to my bosom, whilst I inwardly vowed to afford her all the protection and comfort in my power to bestow. The resolution so suddenly given birth to, I had never reason to recall. This darling girl has eaten of my bread, drank of my cup, and been unto me as a daughter, while she has grown up the solace and sweetener of my existence; and

the love I now feel for this innocent child again draws me back to life, and makes me loth, even at this advanced period, to conclude my earthly pilgrimage. Of her history I know nothing; it was sufficient for me that she was unfortunate, and demanded the concealment implied by Perryn; and I was never even familiar with her name; the only appellation by which I have ever distinguished her, sprung from my heart the moment I beheld her, and that *love* with which I baptized her, flowed from a fountain whose source will remain pure and unruffled during life.

"In security, and in the same angelic purity with which I first received her, has she been reared. Perfectly the child of nature, her mind and body have expanded free from all restraint, and as perfectly without a blemish. No unnecessary confinement has ever warped the regularity of her limbs; nor have the refinements of art ever curtailed one of the numerous flowing ringlets with which nature has gifted her.

Her

Her intelligent mind has also taken nature for its bias; she has seen the seasons succeed each other as they change—the flowers bloom and die—the birds around her rear their young, while they pour their song of gratitude to the great Creator of all for his benefits; and by these means she has been accustomed to judge of effects as they arise from natural causes, and at the same time to account for many a phenomenon which might puzzle wiser people. As for *education*, such as it is denominated by the world at the present day, I have given her none; all that I have endeavoured to teach her, in order to elucidate her Bible, is the existence of an all-wise Being, whose supreme providence watcheth over the welfare, and continues to protect the innocent orphan; and that to adore him, and walk carefully in his ways, will not only ensure her welfare in this life, but secure her eternal happiness in one to come."

CHAPTER XIV.

Sir Hugh perceiving the da
brought her tale to a conclusion,
wishing to fatigue her further by
comments or soliciting questions
thank her and take his leave; a
slowly continued his way to the c
traced in his own mind the singula
to which he had just been listening
female should possess sufficient
of mind, from whatever cause
originate, to endure such self-den
that at an early period of life, he
unprecedented; and he could
drawing a conclusion from what
uttered in regard to *education*.—
female," he argued, "had dated
from its source, at a much earli
of the age, how many hundred

same sex might at the present day be included in the same disaster! and more especially, when the rage for learning and accomplishments was indiscriminately spreading from the metropolis to the remotest villages, and when the young ladies of the charity schools could equally boast of their *governesses* and their attainments with those who contributed towards their education. Times," he reflected, "were miserably changed, since the peasant and the humble mechanic would take his family decently to church; where, attentive to the service, he would, by endeavouring to make it his guide for the ensuing week, get cheerfully through his labour; whereas now the same class of people, from receiving what they call an *education*, fancy they can read as well as their pastor; and instead of attending to the truths which fall from his tongue, and valuing them as sacred, have no other motive for entering the house of prayer, than to criticise his preaching, cavil at his doctrine, and set all

order and decency at defiance. Nor will the evil of general instruction," he mentally argued, " which is so rapidly gaining ground, stop here. Human nature is always aspiring, and will any one condescend to turn servant, or otherwise act in a menial condition, when he can boast an equal portion of instruction with his employer?—certainly not—he would rather, on the contrary, be induced to say—' I look upon myself to be as clever as they, my mind has been as well cultivated, and why should I not hold the same place in society?' Hence arises the spirit of what this class of people call reform, and hence that discontent which they feel in regard to the situation in which Providence has placed them. No!" he exclaimed; " since it is decreed that man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, the labour of the hands must be required; the old dame therefore is right, and the plan of *indiscriminate education* can never benefit the population of any kingdom."

Still

Still ruminating on the subject with which the dame's history had occupied his mind, sir Hugh Singleton, as he proceeded onwards, was totally inattentive to a little figure, who, with a pair of white feet peeping from beneath a long brown cloak that nearly enveloped the rest of her person, in the sweetest voice imaginable, bade him "good-night!"

The forms and usages of the world were alike unknown to Love, for it was she who had been climbing the rocks in pursuit of her goats when she passed the baronet; but the cordial good-night she had often heard received and given between him and her dame, and had even been a sharer of it herself—to have passed him therefore without this friendly salutation, would have been a solecism in the kind of interest which, she scarcely knew how, had been established between them.

Never had the little mountaineer looked half so interesting in the eyes of sir Hugh as at this moment. Her exceeding love-

liness, contrasted with her homely apparel, warned him what she had to expect, if left in an unprotected state, when her patroness should be called away. Beside, there was an indefinite something in her countenance, as she raised it smiling towards him, that caught his view and struck upon his heart. It was a look that demanded his pity, a look of sensibility, that bespoke her born to sympathize with her fellow-creatures, from whom she had been so long secluded—a look that made sir Hugh Singleton, in his own mind, vow never to neglect or forsake the being who gave it. Pressing her tiny hand, which she innocently offered, he returned her salutation, and "good-night" never flowed more cordially from his tongue than it did as he turned into the path which led to the castle, whilst Love continued to scale the precipice in search of her lost favourites.

The time which sir Hugh intended passing at Ap-Howel Castle had been long expired; but as he did include the discovery

very of Frederick in the allotted period, he had been induced to extend it on his account: there being however now no farther inducement for staying, he had fixed the time for returning to the Vale, and preparations were making accordingly.

Again to behold the scenes of his earliest childhood afforded infinite satisfaction to Frederick: in idea he was already embracing every living object that was dear to him, and measuring with his eye every local one; but as there is no pleasure without alloy, so the quitting the two dear inmates of the cabin outweighed the delight he would otherwise have experienced.

Even sir Hugh himself felt a pang of regret stealing upon his heart, when he reflected that he must part from this singular being, who had, by imparting her confidence, her rational conversation, and her maternal care of the children, which bespoke her goodness of heart, however it might have been warped by adverse cir-

cumstances, won his esteem, and that for ever, as from her extreme age he could scarcely hope to see her again. In vain had been the offers of the worthy baronet to better her situation, she equally resisted his offers of carrying her again into society, or of providing her a more suitable habitation; alleging that where the plant had so long continued to vegetate, there it should die, and there be again united to its parent soil: to bid farewell then to his old friend was all that now remained, and the next evening was fixed upon for that purpose.

The philosophy and experience of ages are not wanting to convince us of the mutability of human designs; every day, nay almost every hour, is pregnant with events that shew the frequent impossibility of giving effect to our intentions; and that which is so often planned in the morning, and designed to be executed with the greatest dispatch, is completely frustrated, we scarcely know how, before night.

Thus

Thus it happened with sir Hugh Singleton.

Every necessary preparation towards their quitting Castle Ap-Howel being made, Frederick and his uncle were just setting out on their farewell visit to the ravine, when they were surprised by the sight of old Perryn hobbling as fast as possible towards them. On first recognizing him, sir Hugh experienced somewhat of alarm in respect to his old friend; and that all was not well at the cabin, immediately rushed upon his imagination: walking onwards therefore with a quick step, he soon reached what he deemed the messenger of evil, who was indeed come upon an errand of life and death. Upon questioning the old man, they were quickly informed that the dame had been taken alarmingly ill the day before, that Love had explored her way to his cottage, bearing entreaties that he would instantly return with her, and that he had, at the earnest instigation of the dame, set out for

Castle Ap-Howel to make inquiries for one sir Hugh Singleton, in order to signify to him that she did not expect to be long an inhabitant of this world, and wished, if possible, to see him once more, whilst she had strength and reason left to express her desires.

It is perfectly unnecessary here to describe the deathbed scene of one, who, whatever were her youthful errors, during more than half a century spent in solitude and retirement, must have expiated them by making her peace with Heaven. Suffice it to say, that sir Hugh arrived in time to see "how a Christian can die," and to receive her earnest supplication that he would extend his kindness and protection to the orphan girl she was about to leave behind her.

Is it necessary to repeat to those of my readers who have travelled thus far in company with sir Hugh Singleton, that he promised to comply with her request, or to say that after closing the eyes of a being

being who appeared to live only till she had found the protector she wished for her *protégée*, he had her decently interred; and after bequeathing her habitation with its contents to old Perryn, as a reward for his fidelity, he conveyed the sorrowing *Love* from the scene of her earliest remembrance, to enter a world she scarcely yet knew by name, and to mingle with beings respecting whom she was not able to form even a conjecture.

The baronet now looked upon himself as being wholly responsible for the welfare of the little being thus wonderfully cast upon his protection, and as such, he could not quit that part of the country without endeavouring to obtain from Perryn, who he understood was the person that had confided her to the dame, a farther elucidation of the circumstance. But here the mystery attending the transaction, instead of being, as he expected, unravelled, grew still more intricate. Perryn could give

no

no other account than that he had been applied to by a perfect stranger, to find some person who could rear up a child in the most profound secrecy, alleging that she had determined enemies, and there were reasons even to fear for her life, should she be discovered by those who were inimical to her welfare. He further added, that believing he could prevail upon the dame to aid him, he had boldly undertaken the proposed measure; for which he had been accustomed to receive a small annual stipend, upon stating the child to be alive and well; but from whom or whence it came, he knew not, as the messenger who came to make the inquiry was always a stranger, the same person never coming twice, and the questions couched in such indefinite terms, that it was impossible for any person to comprehend more than was wished of the business. This was all that Perryn was able to relate upon the subject; and he concluded

ed with humbly hoping that no measures might be taken to deprive him of the accustomed little annuity.

Finding the old man was not much more *au-fait* of the business relative to the birth and parentage of this deserted little female than the dame, sir Hugh found it in vain to question him further upon the subject; and after assuring him that he should still continue to enjoy his annuity, a thing which seemed to him of greater moment than ascertaining to whom the child belonged, Perryn was very willing that *Love* should accompany her new benefactor, when sir Hugh having nothing farther to claim his attention, bade a long and a lasting adieu to the *rocky cabin.*

Lady Ap-Howel, to whom the baronet now ventured to introduce his young *protégée,* had long expressed a wish to behold this *child of Nature,* such as he had frequently described her; she felt a desire to witness in one so totally uninformed the first dawnings of sentiment, and if it

had been permitted her, the future expansion of her mind. But hitherto she had not been able to find an opportunity for such a task, for to have intruded herself into the cabin, without the permission of the recluse, she would have thought a solecism in good-breeding even towards this poor creature; and to have dreamt of separating the child from her protectress, even for a day, was out of the question. She had nothing for it, therefore, but to remain content with the description she received from others, and gladly did she now receive the little trembler, whose bewildered senses could scarcely comprehend what she saw; and had not it been for the desultory conversation she had held with Frederick, respecting the different people with whom he was connected, she might have believed herself in another world.

The beauty and elegance of form so conspicuous in this deserted little creature, could not fail of striking lady Ap-Howel at first sight. Her figure she allowed was

symmetry

symmetry itself, accompanied with a natural gracefulness; her complexion dazzling fair, in spite of its constant exposure to the sun, except her cheeks, and there the rose and lily sweetly blended; her eye—but lady Ap-Howel preferred describing that in the words of her favourite poet, which she thought best calculated to do it justice.

"Her eye was like the star of love,
That blinks across the ev'ning dun;
The locks that wav'd that eye above,
Like light clouds curling round the sun;"

and "the lips, with just a breathing line between," were rich in pouting loveliness; whilst the chin—"but see," she exclaimed,

"The seal Love's dimpling finger hath impress'd,
Denotes how soft that skin which bears his touch."

I therefore need no farther description of such an heavenly assemblage of features. Can the mind," she continued, "which is created to accompany a countenance like this, remain a blank, content only to milk the

the goats, or turn the drowsy spinning-wheel? No! Nature never cast a form in so fine a mould, and then marred her performance, by stamping it with the brand of idiotcy; let it henceforth be my care, by rubbing the rust from this concealed jewel, to make it sparkle with its natural light and brilliancy! Brother!" addressing sir Hugh, "will you confide your *protégée* to my care? it will not only afford me infinite satisfaction to lead this little creature from the dense atmosphere by which she is surrounded, to one enlightened by the rays of instruction, but it will also be an act of charity to give me so eligible an employment."

This was exactly the point to which sir Hugh had wished to bring lady Ap-Howel; for in no situation could he have placed the interesting girl with half the satisfaction to himself, as with her ladyship. Delighted therefore to see all the best feelings of her heart called forth, and to hear her give those feelings vent in language

language which assured him, that in her his young favourite would indeed find a protectress equal in kindness to the one she had lost, left him no time for hesitation; and he instantly assured his warm-hearted sister, that he could not more gladly have complied with any request she might have made him.

To the retired manners and strict moral conduct in which lady Ap-Howel had been educated in her youth, were now added many modern accomplishments, the chief of which had been acquired by a natural taste for the elegant and picturesque, with a kind of intuitive knowledge which enabled her to appropriate to herself every thing worth acquiring. Thus her ladyship was mistress of many ingenious performances beside drawing; and not to have excelled in that delightful art, she would have deemed unpardonable, having such a succession of striking objects, whichever way she turned, to engage her pencil. Lady Ap-Howel was likewise a disciple of

of the tuneful nine, and the same romantic shades which furnished subjects for the pencil, she discovered were favourite walks of the muses also, who frequently inspired her pen, and on some occasions called forth compositions, which, for pathos and energy, might vie with a Cowper or Montgomery. This lady possessed also, in concert with her brother sir Hugh, a decided taste for the cultivation of flowers, which formed one of her greatest sources of amusement; and in the grounds which surrounded the castle, her taste shone conspicuous in the judicious mixture of nature and art which here prevailed, each depending upon the other, except where a combination was necessary, and then they were so ingeniously blended as to give an increased effect upon the whole. Lady Ap-Howel having no family, and her time not much occupied by a routine of visiting, this accomplished woman sought every means of improving her mind and cultivating her understanding; and instead of lounging

lounging away her mornings, a prey to that listless languor and inactivity so frequently indulged by indolent females, who scarcely know whether they are asleep or awake, she caught at this innocent and ingenious method of filling up those hours, which, if once lost, can never be regained, and thereby attaining health and a cheerful flow of spirits, which enabled her to ward off the demon ennui, so much dreaded, and so much complained of, by modern fine ladies.

Such was the woman to whom this innocent and untaught *child of Nature* was confided—this, in the plenitude of her existence, was lady Ap-Howel!

CHAP-

CHAPTER XV.

Sir Howel Ap-Howel, baronet of Howel Castle, Flintshire, was of a temperament *tout-au-fait contraire* to that of his spouse; yet their principles were similar in essentials, though their opinions might differ in trifles. Their tastes were certainly opposite, yet they generally agreed in temper, thus constantly attracting and repelling each other; yet however great the contrast of character might appear between them, they possessed the same harmony of heart, and the same active benevolence shone forth in the conduct of both.

Sir Howel was the last descendant of the male line of a long list of ancestors, who, from time immemorial, had held possession of the castle; and so great was his veneration for this relic of antiquity, that he would

would have deemed it almost sacrilege to have removed a stone from its walls, or twisted a branch from any of the venerable oaks by which it was surrounded. Sir Howel was also a great advocate for liberty in all its branches—not for the goddess tricked out in the fantastical cap of that name, who, under pretence of giving freedom to mankind, is often the promoter of factions and rebellion. No; the liberty he cavilled for was, to use full freedom of conduct, to do exactly as he liked; and in order to shew the generosity of his disposition in that respect, he was equally willing to allow the same latitude to others which he enjoyed himself. This love of freedom he even carried so far as to allow it to inanimate objects: for instance, he never suffered his trees to be pruned, or, very rarely, his woods to be cut, because he could not bear to see them curbed of their natural luxuriancy, while the majestic oak, the tall elm, and the spreading oak, continued to flourish where they first took root,

root, unless levelled by time in wild entanglement; thus affording rich subjects for her ladyship's pencil. In what were called the pleasure-grounds belonging to the castle, the case indeed was different; there lady Ap-Howel reigned supreme, for every thing was submitted to her care and management, though not unfrequently without an expostulation from sir Howel on her cruelty in so frequently lopping away her trees and shrubs, which, he would aver, ought to have the liberty of extending their branches as they pleased. By the same rule of general freedom, he never suffered snails, insects, or any kind of reptile, to be destroyed in his presence, alleging, by way of reason for his forbearance, that it was impossible to destroy them all, however destructive they might be, and therefore of no use to exterminate any—"Let them," he would say, "crawl on free and unmolested; *I* like to gratify my own wishes and propensities, and without doubt they, poor things, do the same; let them therefore

therefore continue to crawl on in peace." Had sir Howel been able to indulge this extraordinary propensity to the utmost, he would have stood in danger of being devoured by the reptile tribe, rather than kill them—starved to death in his own castle, rather than disturb the tranquillity of the poultry-yard, or buried alive amidst the entanglement of his own woods. But luckily for him, a hand frequently worked unseen to preserve him from falling a sacrifice to his own hypothesis, whilst he remained perfectly satisfied that all was conducted conformably to his wishes.

These little peculiarities lady Ap-Howel regarded more as emblems of kindness and humanity in her husband than as blots in his understanding; instead, therefore, of holding up an argument in order to convince him of the absurdity of such false indulgences, she rather chose to circumvent them, where she could do so with propriety. To one possessing so large a distribution of the milk of human kindness, her lady-

ship knew she need not apply for permission to shelter a houseless orphan; besides, it would have been peculiarly hard if sir Howel, while he permitted unqualified freedom of action to every other being, had denied it to his wife. That indeed would have been to overthrow his whole system, and, luckily for him, lady Ap-Howel possessed too much prudence and good sense to make him repent the latitude he allowed her. When, therefore, she presented her interesting *protégée*, he perfectly acquiesced in her plan of protection, and seemed alike struck with the simplicity and beauty of her exterior.

"But what will you do with the poor thing, lady Ap-Howel?" he inquired. "She cannot run about the house with these little naked feet, however white they may be, and to shackle her with shoes and stockings, after having enjoyed so much liberty, would be cruel; besides, I am sure she will never be brought to like them, and to enforce her wearing them will be absolute tyranny;

tyranny; and I cannot consent to have any species of tyranny exercised in my house, you know, my dear."

"Oh, never mind the naked feet!" exclaimed her ladyship, eager in her present pursuit; "we shall contrive a method, no doubt, by which we may introduce those dreaded shoes and stockings, without any degree of violence to the wearer;" when having settled this matter to the satisfaction of the baronet, and gained her point in regard to retaining the little orphan, to the satisfaction of herself, lady Ap-Howel retired, in order to seek sir Hugh, and with him the highly-gratified Frederick.

From the time that he had learned the generous intention of lady Ap-Howel towards his delightful little companion, the grateful boy appeared to be in a kind of joyful delirium, whilst the idea that she would no longer be left in the rocky cabin, exposed, in his estimation, to a thousand dangers, afforded him the highest gratifica-

tion; when more forcibly to express the ecstasy of his feelings, he opened his arms to their utmost extent, in order to admit an immense young Alpine mastiff to his embrace, and who he was in the act of hugging with all his might, when his aunt, and the first object of his solicitude, appeared before him.

In a moment both dog and Frederick were at their side, when Love, terrified at the sight of such an enormous animal, whose jaws seemed wide enough to have devoured her, hung trembling behind her protectrice, entreating Frederick not to let the creature come near her; when the dog, accustomed to pursue his master when he retreated in sport, immediately darted after her, and fixing one of his enormous fore-paws upon each of her shoulders, began very lovingly to lick her face, as if rejoiced to find an addition to the frolicking party. Lion's embraces, however, were not so kindly received as proffered; for the little girl, unaccustomed even to behold such an animal,

animal, was so much alarmed, that she sunk fainting upon the grass, ere Frederick's utmost exertions could release her from the sagacious creature, who, no doubt, considered her in the light of another sportive being, who, as well as his master, would assist and encourage him in his gambols.

Frederick, exceedingly alarmed, shouted out *Lion* with all his might, but the incorrigible Lion refused to discontinue his caresses; and when he beheld his dear little companion, as he thought, in the arms of death, he set no bounds to his grief; and it was some time before lady Ap-Howel could sufficiently claim his attention to dispatch him to the house for assistance. At length, comprehending what was wanting, quick as an arrow from the twanging bow, he darted off, and almost as quickly returned with some of the female domestics, who were not long in conveying the terrified girl to the house, where, after administering proper restoratives, she quickly recovered,

vered, to the delight of the rest of the family as well as Frederick, who promised that Lion should in future be properly secured, and by that means have no farther opportunity of alarming her.

Love thought this very kind, for certainly she was greatly afraid of Lion; but as she observed several others of his species who enjoyed their liberty at Castle Howel, she began to reflect that they could not be so terrific in their nature as she had apprehended, and in that case she thought it cruel to confine poor Lion; besides, she remarked that Frederick was so fond of playing with him, and had related the many clever tricks which he had taught him to perform, and which, in the event of his confinement, would be lost, she therefore begged that Lion, though he was not so pretty nor so gentle as her own dear Willey, might again be set at liberty, when she would endeavour not to be so much afraid of him.

"And will you really try to like Lion, dear

dear Love?" cried Frederick, with vivacity; "I am sure you will soon be quite fond of him, he is so very good-natured, and almost big enough to carry you—nay, I am certain he could carry you now, if you would let him, though he is only six months old, and that, you know, is very young for a dog."

"Yes, he might perhaps be strong enough to carry me if you insisted upon it, but I do not wish to be carried; besides, he will never love me like my own dear Willey."

At the mention of Willey, who had been equally the favourite and playfellow of them both, Frederick immediately flew to his uncle, to beg that Willey might be permitted to become an inhabitant of the castle: "for," added he, "when Lion and I shall be gone, Love will not have a soul to amuse her when she is inclined to run up and down the lawn, or gambol amongst the precipices as we used to do; and then she will become melancholy, and her pretty face will not look gay and smil-

ing—indeed half her smiles seem to be vanished already—and then I should be so sorry!" he continued, whilst the tear of sympathy started to his eye, and proved, had he stood in need of it, a powerful auxiliary to enforce the already-granted request.

The playfulness and attachment of the little animal in question, both as related by Frederick, and his own observation, had not been forgotten by the indulgent sir Hugh, who, ever alive to the tender sensibilities of nature, delighted to encourage them in others. To have deprived the interesting child therefore of the only thing which had particularly engaged those sweet affections of the heart, that she would no doubt have bestowed upon any fellow-creature of her own age, with whom she had associatad, would have been a cruelty which the humane heart of the baronet could never have put in practice. In the gift, therefore, of the dame's worldly possessions, which he had made to Perryn, a reserve had been made of the favourite goat,

goat, with orders that he might be immediately conducted to the castle, where his safe arrival soon brought a return of those smiles, the absence of which Frederick had just been deploring.

To become an inmate with lady Ap-Howel, even if one were not the object of her kindest attentions, and not love her, thought Love, would be impossible. How much more strongly attracted towards her then must this child of her bounty be, who was daily experiencing marks of her fondest affection, and who, by the time that sir Hugh Singleton and his nephew took their departure, was as affectionately attached to this excellent woman as if she had been her real, instead of her adopted mother! by which endearing appellation she was allowed to distinguish her. The mind which her ladyship had chosen to work upon was ductile, and not only capable of receiving impressions with facility, but of retaining them when received; and with such an instructress, who saw the necessity

cessity of cautiously unfolding the page of life to her uninitiated pupil, her mind could not fail to expand in a requisite degree, and to give promise that she would in future become every thing which her kind protectress required.

The arrival of Love at Castle Howel just at this period was particularly agreeable to the mistress of the mansion, whose spirits had been worn out with the boisterous manners and uninformed mind of Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, who was a niece of sir Howel's, and who my readers may recognize in her visit to the dame's cabin, and on whom all lady Ap-Howel's rhetoric, for a reform in manners as well as example, had equally failed. To have made an impression of refinement upon one who, to use her own phrase, was never so happy as when she was kicking up a rumpus, would have been the attempting to cleanse the Ethiop from his spots, or to stop the motion of the waves; her ladyship therefore gave over the attempt; and as the young

young lady's visit was expected to terminate with the summer, the only thing she could do was to tolerate that vulgarity and ignorance which she could not correct.

During lady Ap-Howel's life, she had never been a frequenter of public places; and though passionately devoted to the drama, she had scarcely ever witnessed the representation of half a dozen plays. All her acquaintance therefore with our dramatic authors had been from reading their compositions; and so firmly was she attached to the works of our immortal Shakespeare, that she would frequently aver she could never be tired either with seeing or reading the divine productions of his pen. On one of these occasions, when her ladyship was speaking with enthusiasm on the merits of her favourite author, she was interrupted by Miss Griffiths, who hastily exclaimed—"Oh, I hate Shakespeare's plays; they are all a parcel of nonsense, and I never wish to see none of them. They are most

of

of them very indelicate, and some I have been told are so bad, they can't be acted at all. Why only think of one of them, where there is an account of cutting up Christians, and putting their arms and legs into *a pie*, which is the frightfullest thing I ever heard of, and which would be a shame indeed to have acted; and so, my good aunt, you may, for me, stick to your darling Shakespeare."

Lady Ap-Howel, however she might feel shocked at the illiterate language of Miss Jeannette, could not help smiling at her curious critique; and good-naturedly allowing her some room for dislike of a work merely fictitious, besides barbarous in its effects, demanded if she had ever read Thomson's Sophonisba? which, as a contrast to the one she was speaking of, had been drawn from history, with a strict adherence to truth, and might therefore better please her.

"Sophy who?" asked Miss Griffiths.

"Sophonisba,"

"Sophonisba," repeated lady Ap-Howel, turning over the leaves of the volume which contained the tragedy; "and see, here is a beautiful print of Mrs. Oldfield in that character."

"Sophy Nisbar," drawled Miss Jeannette, stretching out her neck to look at it. "Well, she is an ugly Miss, though she has got a crown upon her head, and looks as melancholy as a cat; so I suppose this is another dismal story. No, no, fun and pastime for me! I hate your dismals, and will keep out of the way of them as long as I can; so, my dear aunt, you must excuse my making any farther acquaintance with Miss Sophy Nisbar, and away she scampered, laughing at what she deemed a witty conceit, and as self-satisfied as if she had given utterance to the happiest *bon mot* imaginable.

Scarcely had love been an inhabitant of Castle Howel a week, when a summons, in the form of a letter, came to apprise Miss

Miss Griffiths, that it was necessary for her to return home; but she, in the very spirit of perverseness, then declared a wish to stay at least for another week, as she had some indispensable business to transact, which would prevent her from stirring during that time.

"*Business*, my dear?" questioned lady Ap-Howel; "what business can you possibly have to prevent your complying with the summons? not that I wish to drive you out of the house, only I wish to know what this momentous concern can be, that will so fully occupy you?"

"My dear madam," she answered, with assumed solemnity, "I have a pair of gloves to mend; and if they will not find me employment for a week, hating work as I hate it, I will be content to sit down and read your melancholy story of *Sophy Nisbar*."

This, to Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, who, like the inhabitants of the Brazils, possessed

possessed a characteristic contempt for all reading, would, she conceived, be the very acme of punishment, and quoted it accordingly.

END OF VOL. II.

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SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. III.

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FEARS AND CARES.

CHAPTER I.

"THE life of every man," says an eminent divine, "is a continued chain of incidents, each link of which hanks upon the former;" and so thought sir Hugh Singleton, as he meditated on the many incidents which had so unexpectedly occurred during his late excursion, and which appeared so evidently connected with each other.—"Had not Frederick," he reflected, "been decoyed away, he would never perhaps have thought of going to Castle Howel; in that case he had not seen one of the greatest curiosities

in nature, almost amounting to a miracle —a human being, the number of whose years approached those of the patriarchs, and who enjoyed the full possession of her faculties: nor would he have had the most interesting little being in the universe committed to his protection. Oh, God!" he exclaimed, almost aloud, "how unsearchable are thy ways! and how often are the most important events brought about by what appears to us the most adverse means! How patiently therefore ought we to submit to thy apparent corrections!"

Joyfully did the *travellers* now retrace that road which sir Hugh had so gloomily passed over but a short while before, when his mind was filled with melancholy forebodings, as to the safety of the precious charge which he was now conducting in triumph to his home; and joyfully did his pulses throb, as he anticipated the delight he should experience on again beholding him pressed to the bosoms of his

his exulting parents; and as these sensations pressed upon his heart, and vibrated through his brain, he wished to have added wings to sluggish steeds, in order that they might keep pace with his *volant* desires.

Mr. and Mrs. Singleton, who had been already apprised of the time when the fugitive was expected to return, were in readiness to receive him at Myfod Vale, when, after the first ebullition of joy had escaped the enraptured mother, at once more embracing her lost son, she burst forth in her usual energetic strain, exclaiming—"Well, my dearest Frederick, long-looked-for come at last. I said it was a long lane that had no turning, and I always felt as though you would come home again, though we were so ready to make mountains of mole-hills; so never mind—all is well that ends well, you know; and now you are grown big enough to take care of yourself in future. Why, bless me, brother!" she continued,

"how tall he is grown! He will make us look about shortly. I declare he is as tall as my shoulder already!"

What his mother had advanced in regard to Frederick's height was true; he had indeed shot up surprisingly during his quiet residence in the ravine; proper exercise, a plain but healthful diet, added to a fine bracing Welsh air, whenever he mounted the heights, had done wonders for him; and those who knew the child that had been taken from his home, felt it difficult to recognize him in the tall well-grown youth before them.

Happiness unalloyed, save one care which would intervene, was now the portion of the fortunate Frederick; to visit again the spot endeared to him from infancy, to see and embrace all the beings he had ever loved, was indeed true felicity; and as such his young heart acknowledged it with gratitude. Yet there was one other being whom he could not banish from his recollection—the being who had

had been his undivided companion for the last few months of his life, she who had shared his griefs, and participated in his sorrows, while she had done her utmost to alleviate them; and whenever *Love*, and her favourite companion Willey, came across his recollection, he could not avoid the sigh and the wish that aunt Howel would consent for them to live once more together at Myfod Vale.

Domestic harmony once more established in his mansion, sir Hugh Singleton again turned his thoughts towards Frederick's education, which, from the time that had been lost, now became the more indispensable; but here some little demur arose between the brothers, as to the propriety of again sending him to school, where his safety might be equally endangered, or the engaging a private tutor for him at home; when the latter was at length decided upon, and an inquiry immediately set on foot relative to a gentleman who was not only competent to in-

struct his pupil in the various branches of learning necessary for him to acquire, but one also who might be equally qualified to attend him in the same capacity when he entered the university. Such a one was quickly discovered in the person of Henry Meillard, who, to the profoundest erudition, added every elegant and useful accomplishment, and who promised to become a great acquisition to Frederick; whilst a congeniality of taste and sentiment seemed to reign between him and sir Hugh.

This of course rendered such an addition to the family highly agreeable; and dame Fortune, by showering her present benefits, appeared willing to compensate for the scurvy tricks which she had so lately played them.

In this way things glided smoothly on for some time; but as "change forms the very essence of the world," says the same divine whom I quoted at the beginning of my chapter, sir Hugh was not authorized to

to expect an unruffled continuance of his present serenity. Yet, to be obliged to quit his now-peaceful roof, he considered very unpleasant, and in the present case doubly irksome; for it was to attend the trial of the old gipsy-man and Cramptext.

The annual assizes for the county in which they had been committed were approaching, when both sir Hugh and his brother, as prosecutors of this nefarious couple, were obliged to attend; and although the charge against the criminals was much lessened by the certainty of Frederick's being alive, still they were amenable to the laws of their country for child-stealing, and obliged to abide by their sentence accordingly. That Cramptext did not actually force the child from his home, had been made clear by the statement of Frederick himself, but that he had been aiding and abetting in it, was also made as clear by the demonstration of the *old man*; the punishment

therefore of both was the same—transportation for seven years, the one as the probable instigator of the wicked action, and the other for detaining the child, knowing him to have been stolen.

Cramptext, as soon as sentence was passed upon him, bowed humbly to the court, and ironically thanked the judge for his clemency, while he added—"For many years I have been most desirous of travelling as a missionary into foreign parts to teach the gospel, and now your lordship has been so kind, unsolicited, as to send me, and for which I will not cease to pray that you, my lord, may be grounded in the true faith, and in time become one of us. As to sir Hugh Singleton, I beg he will also accept my thanks for having furthered this design; and when I shall again return to England, perhaps I may be able to give him a little further information respecting his nephew, by way of recompence;" then turning up his eyes, and spreading both his hands

hands upon his breast, he again bowed with great affected humility, and was led out of the court.

To have thus got rid of this artful wretch afforded no small degree of satisfaction to the Singletons; for, however watchful, who can at all times guard against the machinations of a secret enemy? Yet to what he alluded in his expression of "further information" respecting Frederick, was impossible for them to define. They could not tax their memories with having ever injured the man, even in the slightest degree; whilst he had endeavoured to injure the whole family, and that by wounding them in the most vulnerable part. There was the cripple too, that hideous Ambrose, of whom Frederick had spoken as being the person who had dragged him away, and of whom he was in constant dread; for what purpose could he be in league with this vile Cramptext, and that horde of gipsies, thus to injure them, was still to be

discovered. But if the horrid wretch could still be discovered, and brought within the cognizance of the law, no clemency should screen him. Thus protested both the brothers, as they returned from executing a meritorious deed—a deed of justice.

From this time nothing occurred of sufficient moment to disturb the tranquillity that reigned at Myfod Vale. Frederick, as he grew in stature, improved also in mental acquirements, while the abilities of the youth gave fair promise of what might be expected in the man. With lady Ap-Howel a constant correspondence was kept up, though no personal intercourse had taken place between them for the last two or three years, sir Howel being averse to quitting home himself, or permitting her ladyship to do so without him, although, had she expressed a decided wish to have done so, he would not, agreeably to his system, have thwarted her; but she, knowing his dislike

dislike either to travelling, or the being left to himself, never hinted a desire of leaving him. In all her letters she constantly mentioned *Love* as being every thing she could wish, and improving both in person and mind; whilst she stated that her only subject of regret was, the not being able to procure masters proper to initiate her in those accomplishments in which she was herself deficient. But as these, sir Hugh reflected, were but few, he was perfectly satisfied that his *protégée* should not be a wiser woman than his sister, whilst he was confident she could not be a better.

From lady Ap-Howel the fortunate Love continued to receive the highest examples of every feminine virtue; in the duty and affection of a wife she shone unrivalled; and no doubt, had Providence blessed her with a family, she would have done the same in her maternal character—witness the care she bestowed upon the orphan thus cast upon her protection;

whilst her precepts sunk too deep in the youthful mind ever to be forgotten. Happy then, as every endearing attention could make her, the little mountaineer grew and expanded like a well-cultivated flower, which the hand of the florist guards alike from storms, or the approach of noxious weeds to corrupt its purity; whilst it flourishes in security, and diffuses its sweets around.

Simply to hear of the welfare of Frederick, afforded Love the greatest delight; she would then recall the happy time they had spent together in the rocky cabin, when her dear old dame was present to bless them both, and a tear, the symbol of sensibility, would bedew her eye at the cherished remembrance; or, when gambolling in the lovely shades of Howel Castle with her constant companion Willey, whom she still fondly loved, frisking beside her, she would talk to him of their friend, when the sagacious creature would look wistfully in her face, and by its bleating

ing

ing appear to understand her. On the other, to hear of Love's improvements, and Love's accomplishments, was sure to prove a stimulus to the exertions of Frederick; and what would *she* think if such and such things marked the criterion of his actions; while to be thought worthy of her approbation seemed the *summum bonum* of his earthly felicity.

Thus these two young people, whom chance had so unaccountably thrown together, appeared, even in early life, to possess a secret influence over the conduct and welfare of each other.

Time now imperceptibly bore each party along. Hitherto Frederick had been the delight and chief care, as he was the companion of his uncle's life. Days, months, and years, had glided away, and in their flight had nearly matured the rosy playful boy into the elegant young man, when the necessity of parting with him painfully struck upon the feelings of sir Hugh, as he referred to his genealogical tree, where

where he had inserted the date of this cherished scion. That it was high time for him to attend the university, if he meant to give him an academic education, he was now convinced; he was also as certain that, from the proficiency he had made in his studies, under the guidance of Mr. Meillard, that he was qualified to appear there with honour to himself, and credit to his tutor; yet the pang of separation was hard to bear, and he therefore wished to ward it off as long as possible; but the ardour of study, and the thirst after knowledge which Frederick had imbibed, led him first to propose the separation.

Myfod Vale again exhibited an aspect somewhat different from the mild and placid one which it had lately worn; every thing now seemed bustle and confusion—so many arrangements to make for the comfort and accommodation of the travellers, it being fixed that Meillard was to accompany his pupil—so much visiting,

ing, by way of taking leave of friends, &c. &c. that Frederick was glad when he could steal an hour to himself, and ramble unmolested through scenes so dear to him. At such times a soft regret, a tender melancholy, would steal over him, as the idea arose in his mind, that he was shortly to quit this beloved spot, when he would give vent to his feelings in some little poetic description like the following:—

"Why is this sad silent sigh?
Why this tear that dews mine eye?
Why this pain so smother'd here,
To my soul so sadly dear?
'Tis soft melancholy's pow'r—
Oft she dims the radiant hour,
Stealing o'er my senses slow,
As the veil o'er evening's brow."

Then hastily dashing the obtrusive tear from his cheek, he would endeavour to dwell on scenes towards which the lively finger of hope pointed in perspective. These would turn the current of his thoughts, and by the time he reached home,

home, not a vestige of his recent melancholy was discernible.

How evanescent, oh youth, are thy joys and sorrows, chasing each other like sunshine and cloud! The cloud appears, and for a time our prospects are overshadowed, and we fancy all is lost, when despair stands ready to overwhelm us. Again the sun breaks forth in all his splendour, the spirits imperceptibly become buoyant, and all the recent threatening evils are happily forgotten.

CHAPTER II.

HEAVILY laden appeared the pinions of Time, as they bore sir Hugh Singleton along after the departure of his nephew: in him he had been accustomed to look for every solace and amusement, both in sickness and in health; his had been the hand to smooth the pillow of the one, and to give a still higher zest to the enjoyment of the other; and wanting him, the baronet seemed to want every thing that could render life desirable.

Not many months had elapsed since the departure of Frederick and Mr. Meillard for Oxford, ere the stagnant stream of life, which flowed languidly along in the veins of sir Hugh, received a fillip, from a report that the ruins of the neighbouring castle, which he still delighted to wander

wander over when his spirits were at a lower ebb than ordinary, in order to meditate on scenes gone by, were occupied by some inhabitant, or, as the common people rather chose to express it, *haunted*. That no part of these ruins which he had ever traversed, and he believed himself thoroughly acquainted with the whole, could be made the dwelling-place of any individual, he was persuaded. The roof which covered every part of the building had long since disappeared—

———"And the voice of the people is heard no more: the thistle shook there its lonely head: the moss whistled in the wind:"

while the tall dismantled towers, and high dilapidated walls, richly covered with twining ivy, were all that now remained to threaten destruction to all below.

"Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged day? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls on thy empty court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield."

Where

Where then, amidst this desolation, he questioned, could any one lay concealed? But lights, it was reported, had been seen there at different times of the night, casting a reflection upon several parts of the falling fabric, as they were supposed to be moved in different directions; when at length they would become stationary, issuing only at a sort of loop-hole which overlooked that side of the castle laved by the river. To this there was no possible access but by a boat; and even in that case such a mode of approach could not be accelerated with any great facility, as the castle itself had been founded on a perpendicular rock many feet above the water; and the loop-hole, described as issuing the light, was situated several feet higher in the walls of the castle. To give credit, therefore, to so idle a report, was for sir Hugh impossible, and he begged, whenever the subject was alluded to in his presence, that it might be dispensed with.

However strongly the mention of this singular

singular report might be forbidden in the immediate presence of sir Hugh, still the people would talk; nor could he be prevented at all times from hearing the whispers and surmises which were in constant circulation around him, till at length he began to question within himself whether it was not a subject worth inquiring into. At length he argued, if it afforded no satisfaction to himself, it might produce conviction in the minds of others, when they were assured that no one could obtain sufficient shelter in any part of those ruins to make them habitable; and as to supernatural appearances, he trusted that he should have sufficient influence to settle them upon that head. Thus thinking, the baronet was not long in forming the resolution of watching himself through the night, unknown to any one, when he could take his station in different parts of the ruin, in order to ascertain if there was really any extraordinary appearance, to warrant so wild a conjecture as that of any inhabitant

inhabitant residing in the castle; when having once formed the design, he was not long in putting it in execution.

During several nights then this indefatigable elucidator of mysteries, wrapped in a long watch-coat, took his station in the ruined castle; and as he glided from battlement to battlement, or leant over the mutilated walls of the topmost tower, he delighted to contemplate the brilliant works of a divine Creator; and while he viewed the glorious expanse above, his soul became wrapt in enthusiastic admiration, and he soared in idea so far above this sublunary sphere, as scarcely to remember he was still one of earth's humble inhabitants. These refulgent luminaries at length fading away, were lost in Sol's superior radiancy, when sir Hugh would return to take possession of the couch he had forsaken, fully convinced that no grounds existed for the idle reports which had gone abroad, and which were now, on his

his part, more solemnly interdicted than ever.

The accounts received from Oxford relative to Frederick were highly satisfactory. Meillard constantly spoke in the highest terms both of his pupil's conduct and abilities; stating, moreover, that he had not only obtained the countenance of some of the most learned men in the university, but had also received several honorary considerations for his Greek and Latin compositions, which gave great promise of future perfection. This, with the handsome stipend allowed by the indulgent sir Hugh, enabled him to appear upon an equality with those of the highest rank, and were certain passports to the first order of society; while so highly was he estimated for his high talents and suavity of manners, that to be known to Frederick Singleton was no small addition to the consequence of many an inferior.

Sir Hugh was now looking forward to the

the approaching vacation with increasing delight, as it would again return his beloved nephew to Myfod Vale, when Allan, who was still hale and hearty, though some fourscore winters had passed his head, crept into the room to inform the baronet that the beautiful new horse which he had purchased for young master was arrived, adding—"'Tis a beautiful creature, your honour, and I'll warrant me but he will sit it well, and look as grand as a prince, just as he used to do when he would gallop away with his little poney, and lead me many a scramble. Poor poney," he continued, with a sigh, "your master is rather too tall to ride you now; and you, as well as old Allan, must soon be laid upon the shelf."

"Well, my old friend," replied the benevolent sir Hugh, "we can none of us arrest the flight of Time, you know, and must therefore learn to abide his consequences; but we will take care to make the shelf as easy as we can both to you and

and the *poney;* so go and receive the new steed, and see that he is properly taken care of."

Away went Allan, whilst a tear, which he gave to the memory of "auld lang syne," glistened in his eye; and he proceeded to recall the days of his youth, when all was joy, hilarity, and delight; but which, he sadly reflected, had quickly passed away, leaving pain, debility, and vexation of spirit, in their stead.

The figure of Frederick Singleton, when he again became an inhabitant of Myfod Vale, could not fail to strike every beholder, from the great improvement which had taken place since his residence at the university. From a boy his figure had been considered as singularly graceful, and his countenance, consisting of features stamped in the finest model of Roman beauty, was remarkably intelligent. His hair, of the raven's glossy hue, curled wide and high over his prominent forehead, whilst

"His

" His eye, an intellectual lance,"

darted forth fires that blazed within. On such a countenance as this, when united with an expression of sensibility, combined with every noble and generous passion, could any one refuse to gaze without admiration? and whilst sir Hugh tenderly embraced this object of his hopes, he inwardly confessed that he looked more worthy to be the *heir* of a dukedom than of Myfod Vale.

With the glowing heart of a parent exulting in the proficiency of his first-born son, did sir Hugh Singleton now write to lady Ap-Howel, minutely detailing the improvements and accomplishments of his highly-prized favourite; when, as he was about to put the finishing stroke to his letter, Frederick entered, and knowing to whom he was writing, he begged his uncle would add his entreaties to his own, that her ladyship, with her young charge, would not suffer the time allowed for his

vacation to elapse without making her promised visit to the Vale.

Although it was some years since these juvenile friends had met, neither had forgotten the other; nor was it likely the impression which each had received under circumstances so extraordinary and romantic should be obliterated from their minds; each then continued to look forward towards a meeting at a future period, whilst both endeavoured, with the greatest degree of application, to render themselves worthy of each other's approbation. Of personal beauty they thought nothing, as far as regarded themselves; they were only sensible that the other was handsome; and if at any time an allusion was made to the beauty of either, they only valued the possession as the means of rendering them more agreeable to each other; and the period of their meeting was now looked forward to with equal impatience on both sides.

"Hold

"Hold your tongues, you gibbering young fools, you," cried old Allan, in a peevish tone, to some of the stable-boys, as Frederick was passing that way to take a look at the stud; "haven't I told you fifty times, and fifty at the end of that, there is no such a thing as a *ghost*; and that his honour will turn the first of you away that dares to talk of the one at the castle?"

"Oh, ho!" cried a pert groom, as he was currying his master's horse, "then you allow, master Allan, that there is a *ghost*, after all, at the castle, eh?"

"Who? I—I allow of ghosts and goblins?" cried Allan, in alarm; "I allow of no such thing, and firmly believe there never was such a thing since the days of Saul, when the witch of Endor conjured up the spirit of Samuel; and therefore I am sure I never said there was a ghost at the castle or any where else; and if you have a mind to keep your place, Mr. Timothy, you'll be silent about it also;"

when away went Allan, having, by his interference, put an end to the forbidden discourse amongst them for the present.

"To what do these people allude?" thought Frederick, as he passed on. "A *ghost* at the castle, did they say, and forbidden by their master to talk of it—whence this mystery, and from what can it proceed? I never remember hearing of such a tale, yet it is certain that such an one exists, and as equally certain that I must sift it to the bottom."

At first he thought of returning immediately to the stables, and by demanding an explanation of the servants, make himself master at once of the secret; but a moment's reflection brought to his mind that the subject was a forbidden one—forbidden too by his uncle; it would therefore ill become him to engage these men in a discourse directly opposite to the will of their master, or to worm a secret from them which he wished not to be divulged. —"No," he half repeated to himself, "I must

must not lead them to an act of disobedience;" and he passed on, still musing as to what he had heard respecting the *ghost* at the castle.

After reflecting some days on the extraordinary circumstance which he found was thus affixed to the ruins, where he could trace many of his boyish gambols, and with whose every part he was perfectly acquainted, and having in vain trusted to chance for a farther elucidation of the mysterious tale, he determined to apply to Allan himself for information on the subject. The old man he knew could deny him nothing; and should sir Hugh discover that he had been too communicative on this forbidden theme, it would be a very easy matter for Allan to obtain forgiveness for his lapse of duty; besides, from him it would go no further, and therefore he considered there would be less impropriety in tempting the old man to confess all he knew about it than any

other of the domestics:—an opportunity was not long wanting.

Allan, on being questioned by his young master, at first seemed averse to answering his questions, and contrived, by all the address he was master of, to turn the subject; but Frederick, grown more eager by repulse, at length so closely pressed his ancient friend, that he could no longer vary from the point, and in a short time his inquiries were fully gratified by learning all that Allan had to communicate on the business.

CHAPTER III.

It was not in the nature of our hero to be appalled by the fabrication of a *ghost tale*; neither was he so credulous as to believe that any reasonable person would have chosen

chosen a habitation in so incommodious a spot as this ruinous castle; but he was rather led to conjecture that it might be some of the wandering tribes, to whom he had been so much indebted in his youth, who had there found a temporary refuge for their own conveniency, or perhaps the terrific Ambrose himself, whose frightful physiognomy had left too deep an impression on his youthful memory ever to be erased; however, of this he was determined that a short time should ascertain the fact.

Between the highly-esteemed Meillard and his docile pupil, from their first knowledge of each other, there had been no concealments, in regard to the common occurrences and transactions of life; and to have made a secret of the subject in question, would have been trespassing upon that branch of communion which had hitherto subsisted between them. To do this, therefore, was by no means Frederick's intention, and he immediately

good friend, in order to ac-
ith the story, and also to
in assisting him to fathom

10 was a man of deep rea-
is true courage, saw the ne-
'elling this business, which,
was no scheme of mischief
a tendency to awe and dis-
weakened by superstition;
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Hugh, amongst the ruins;
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his friend, lost no time in
the measures proper to be
he next evening was fixed
heir design in execution.
had sir Hugh, upon this
momentous

momentous night, bade farewell to the young men, and retired to rest, than they stole out, and secretly and silently pursued their way to the castle. Night had drawn her ebon-coloured mantle closely around; scarce a star glimmered in the dark expanse to guide them on their way; and it was not till after some difficulty that they found themselves before the little wicket by which they gained an entrance into the first court. Here, after they had put to flight a parcel of bats, and a solitary owl that was hooping in one of the turrets just above them, all was silent as the grave; and here it was agreed they should divide from each other sufficiently to occupy different stations, and yet in case either should make discoveries, to remain near enough to be within hearing. This scheme effected, Frederick climbed up one of the falling ramparts which ran alongside of the court, overspread with weeds and tangled grass, whilst Meillard took possession of a snug corner in what was

supposed to have once been the grand banqueting-room, on the opposite side. The night was cold and chill; the few stars which had hitherto shed a twinkling light had disappeared, and the mutilated walls, towering turrets, and pointed projections, were scarcely visible, as, wrapt in meditation, Frederick slowly paced the battlement whence he had taken his station. Yet, dreary as was the hour, he felt a peculiar charm attached to the situation he had chosen—a charm produced by the association of ideas, as he recalled the many happy hours he had spent in climbing amid those very ruins, at an age when all is sweet, all is attractive, in the eyes of youth; and as he continued to muse on the days gone by, a soft and tender melancholy stole over his soul, and steeped his senses of the awful present in forgetfulness.

From the castle his imagination wandered to St. Arvens; there he beheld himself amongst his former schoolfellows, and the

the excellent Mr. Bonus; from thence a coincidence of circumstances carried him in idea to the ravine, the rocky cabin, and its dear inhabitants. Here he could pause, for the bare recollection of one of them was sufficient to stay his wanderings, and appropriate all he had left of remembrance to herself; and when the time would arrive that he should again see her lovely playful countenance—again hear the sweetest voice that ever gave sound to utterance, now occupied his mind, when he was suddenly aroused from the reverie which had taken possession of him, by perceiving a small glimmering light, that flashed at intervals upon some of the broken arches in the court below.

The pleasing meditations in which our hero had indulged for the last hour or two, instantaneously took flight; when self-collected, he immediately prepared to ascertain from whence the appearance, which had so forcibly struck him, proceeded; and descending from his elevation as quickly

and as silently as possible, he gave the appointed signal to Meillard, who was at his side in a moment. Frederick instantly disclosed what he had seen, when both, without hesitation, pushed forward to the adjoining court; but here a small difficulty arose, which precluded their speedy entrance. The heavy arched door, which divided the courts from each other, having lost its fastenings, had sunk in front, and refused in consequence to move upon its creaking hinges; and when at length forced open by the united strength of both, such an entanglement of briars, brambles, and other noxious shrubs, had shot forth under its protection, as nearly to bar their passage. At this juncture, however, a stream of light gleaming along the walls was visible to both, when, as "courage mounteth with occasion," they made a bolder effort, and springing forward, overleaped the difficulties that obstructed them, and were just in time to behold the imperfect shadow of a human form,

form, as it flitted past a projecting part of the ruin, and as suddenly to witness its disappearance.—"Did you observe the shadow?" hastily questioned Frederick, as he seized the arm of his friend: "it was certainly that of a man, and proves beyond a doubt that some one is lurking here; however, we will do our best to unkennel him."

"I certainly saw something of a shade," replied Meillard, "which, as far as I can conjecture, bore the semblance of a man, whom I imagine might be alarmed by the noise we made in scrambling through the bushes, and has thought fit to decamp as speedily as possible."

"Very likely," said Frederick, in a whisper; "but let us turn this corner, which will bring us in front of the chapel, where it is likely he may have screened himself from our farther observation."

"Agreed," returned his friend; "but, at the same time, let us guard against the river, which, you know, laves the perpendicular

dicular rock on which these very walls are founded; and should we take a tumble, our heads might be none of the clearest by the time we reached the depths below."

"Oh, never fear!" cried Frederick, eager in the pursuit of what he believed to be some midnight robber, who had chosen this place as affording a shelter for his depredations, "never fear! I know every creek and turn of the ruin, and will certainly lead you—" *safe*, he would have added, when their ears were startled by a body, which apparently plunged into the water immediately beneath their feet, and which continued to paddle for a second or two, as if endeavouring to gain the shore: when the splashing died away, the sound ceased, and all became silent and gloomy as before.

Struck with consternation, the friends remained a few minutes without giving utterance to the fears that assailed them, when Frederick hesitatingly exclaimed—"Surely it could not be the unhappy creature

creature whom we are in pursuit of, and who, in his eagerness to escape our scrutiny, may have missed his footing, and by so doing have met a premature grave? Oh, my friend! should that indeed be the case, what remorse will my unwarrantable curiosity occasion me!"

"Do not regard the circumstance in that light, my dear Frederick," said Meillard, "nor suffer your noble spirit to be cast down by such a casualty; the sound which has thus alarmed you may have been occasioned by a part of the mutilated wall, which this person, in his hurry to escape our observation, has thrown down; for without doubt he was too well acquainted with the ground he was treading, to fall a victim to heedlessness himself; and now, as I believe here end our adventures for the night, with your permission, I think we may as well, before daylight detects us in our rambles, endeavour to regain possession of our apartments."

Frederick

Frederick offered no objection to his friend's proposal; and arm in arm they hastily quitted the dreary pile.

Sleep brought not its usual degree of peace to the bosom of Frederick. Agitating dreams pursued him through the remainder of the night, and disquieting apprehensions haunted him during the day—apprehensions of his having been, though inadvertently, accessary to the death of a fellow-creature; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could hide his anxiety from the observation of sir Hugh.

Night again surrounded the hemisphere with darkness, when our hero, more eager than ever to obtain a solution to this seeming mystery, prevailed on Meillard to accompany him a second time to the scene of action. Fortunately for our adventurers, sir Hugh retired much earlier than usual to his repose. The murky clouds also that obscured the horizon the preceding evening had, in part, passed away,

away, and given place to a young moon, whose light enabled them better to explore the part they wished, in order to discover if any of the walls had recently given way sufficiently to have precipitated any one into the gulph below.

Every part of the mouldering pile, within the vicinity of the supposed transaction, now underwent the strictest investigation from the indefatigable friends; but nothing resembling a recent fracture was visible, when, puzzled more than ever to account for the phenomenon which had so much astonished them, both in regard to the appearance of the shadow on the building, as well as the splashing in the water, they seated themselves on a projecting fragment, in order once more to discuss the subject.

The moon was now fast sinking behind the distant hills, and in her retreat she cast her pale reflecting light on the lower part of the castle, which was faintly distinguished in the water by a narrow stream

of

of lustre that shot across it. The effect was striking; and as the friends leant forward to observe it more particularly, a paddling in the water again assailed their ears, and in a moment they beheld the figure of a man seated in a small boat, immediately passing in the moon's shadow, and which was as quickly lost again in the obscurity of the walls of the castle.

"Ah, my friend!" exclaimed Frederick, jumping on his feet, "this is certainly the same mysterious fellow that gave me so much uneasiness last night. Well, thank Heaven, he is safe! and again 'my bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne.' But what is the next plan to be pursued? for positively I must have the honour of his acquaintance."

"My advice," replied Meillard, "is, that for this night we give up all further pursuit, as it appears to me, from the height on which we now stand, that nothing more can be discovered here. From your account, and my own observation,

no

no habitable part can exist in the situation upon a level with us; if therefore any person has thought fit to take up their abode in these ruins, it must be in some subterraneous nook, which probably has an outlet or communication with the river, that from generation to generation has bathed the rocky foundation of the castle. It were therefore best, I should think, that our next effort should be to reconnoitre the scite next the water."

"Agreed," cried Frederick; "and now for home and good repose to-night, that we may dream of success the following one."

The next scheme which the friends meditated the putting in practice, in order to gratify their curiosity, seemed rather more difficult to accomplish than those which they had hitherto indulged in. In order to accomplish their designs, the first thing necessary was to look out for a boat proper for the occasion, and it was some time before Frederick could find one whose owner

owner he could rely upon for secrecy and punctuality. At length, however, he observed a shrewd-looking boy constantly paddling up and down the river every evening, in order to draw up the nets which he had deposited for small fry in the morning; and as he glided under the walls of the castle, a fearful hue would steal over his countenance, and betray the trepidation he in vain tried to dissipate, either by looking timidly another way, or setting up a loud discordant whistle, as his boat continued to float slowly down the stream. From this youth, Frederick thought he might obtain what he wanted; it was a sort of thing that was not likely to draw observation from its novelty, and therefore the better adapted to their purpose; when having agreed upon the hour, and named the evening, they had only to desire the boy to fasten his boat amongst some reeds contiguous to the castle.

"The castle, your honour!" repeated the boy, in amazement. "Did your honour

nour really say the castle? Why there be mortal strange sights, they say, as has been seen there—lights flashing over the walls, and groans loud enough to frighten the heart of a Scot, as soon as ever 'tis dark. However, I'll take care your honour shall have the boat; though I wouldn't go there myself in the night for king George's crown, let alone his riches into the bargain."

At the appointed time Frederick, as he had expected, found the boat safe moored for their accommodation, and jumping into it, accompanied by Meillard, they immediately loosened her from her moorings, and set forth in quest of adventures. The moon, now at the full, had risen an hour or two before in all her meridian splendour; and as she cast her broad refulgent light over the scene, every tower and mutilated battlement of the building before them became strikingly visible. All around at the same time was profoundly silent—not a breeze whispered in the opposite foliage, not

not a ripple stirred the clear face of the deep, as they glided under the dark shadow of the rocks below, save the broken oar dipping at intervals in the silvery stream.—" In such a night as this," murmured Frederick,

> " When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise—in such a night——"

" Hush!" cried Meillard, " this is not a time to be poetical. Can you discern what the object is immediately before us?"

" Indeed I can," returned Frederick, in an under-tone; " it is certainly a boat which approaches, steered by a solitary individual. Let us lay to here, under this natural arch, and observe his movements."

The object before them had started forth, as if by magic; it had not passed them, neither had they for any length of way witnessed its advance. From whence then could it come, if not from some outlet in the castle, and which it must now be their business to discover?

In

In a moment the paddling of oars gave notice that the stranger's boat was already in motion; and with almost breathless anxiety they endeavoured to catch a glimpse of this singular personage as he rowed down the stream; but although the whole radiancy of the moon played on him as he passed, so closely was the whole figure enveloped, that it was altogether impossible, and they continued no wiser than they were for the scrutiny.

The splashing of the oars was soon lost in the distance, and a circular winding of the river as quickly concealed the mysterious stranger from their view, when the friends quitted their snug retreat, with a view of discovering if there was any inlet by which this person might have gained access amongst the ruins, and then as easily disappear, when, after winding closely round an inequality of the rock, they discovered a large cavity, shelving upwards, at the extremity of which appeared something very dark, which, upon Frederick's

Frederick's leaping from the boat, and examining, proved to be a low, massy, arched door, constructed, no doubt, to afford an escape by water, should such an event ever be found expedient by the inhabitants of the fabric, and which, the friends having no light to guide them in their search, they relinquished their project of farther inspecting the interior of this subterraneous passage till another opportunity. They then proceeded to conduct the boat to its appointed station, where, having properly fastened it, they once more sought the seclusion of Myfod Vale.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning, as the family party were at their early repast, a packet was delivered, bearing the address of sir Hugh, and which the servant said had been brought by a special messenger to the Vale, and demanded an immediate answer; when the baronet, dividing the seals, discovered the signature of lady Ap-Howel.

Many had been the pressing invitations which had passed on the side of sir Hugh, and longings on that of her ladyship, for a visit to Myfod Vale, without either being able to accomplish their desires, when an unexpected circumstance intervened to call sir Howel to the metropolis, where it would be necessary for him to spend some months. This her ladyship thought a favourable opportunity for grati-

fying her wishes; she therefore sought and obtained permission to pass the intermediate time of his absence between her brothers, neither of whom had she visited since her marriage; and the letter now in question was to announce the joyful tidings, as well as to request that some one would give her and her *protégée* the meeting on the road, as she was deprived of an escort in sir Howel, he being obliged to set out on his journey before she quitted home.

This pleasing intelligence seemed entirely to derange the economy of the breakfast-table. The urn was suffered to cool, the rolls, &c. remained untouched, while Frederick and his uncle were uttering little agreeable soliloquies, and debating upon the arrangement in regard to the requested meeting. At length it was agreed that, as sir Hugh had lately complained of a cold, which so long a journey might not benefit, Frederick himself should take possession of the travelling-chariot, and

and be with her ladyship at the appointed time and place.

This was exactly what our hero wanted. Though some years had passed over his head since he had quitted the little girl who had so humanely assisted him in his wanderings, the remembrance of her was never to be effaced from his memory, nor the gratitude he experienced from his heart, and most ardently had he wished for the period that would again restore her to his sight.

The courier was at length dispatched, and each having finished his meal *à son gout*, Frederick had leisure again to advert to the business by which he had been so much occupied the foregoing evenings, and which he was determined should be effectually sifted to the bottom before he had done with it; and a consultation was again held between the friends, as to the best method of proceeding.

Méillard, whose experience enabled him to look a little deeper into things than his *ci-devant* pupil, alleged that it was

of no use to continue their nightly observations; for if there was any person who had sought concealment in the ruined castle, it must evidently be in the subterraneous part of it, and *night* therefore could but little befriend them in the search. It was then his strenuous opinion, he added, that by gaining an entrance at the concealed postern, which they had observed from the river, and which he thought it easy to accomplish at low water, they might be able to obtain all the information they required.

Frederick instantly saw the feasibility of the scheme thus suggested by his friend, and as immediately consented to the putting it in execution; when an application was again made to the young fisherman for the loan of his boat, which he was requested to leave, after casting his nets, at the same place as usual.

This the boy promised to do, and wondering within himself what the gentlemen could see in his clumsy old leaky vessel,

vessel, to take such a fancy to it, went whistling about his business.

To gain an entrance into this place in the height of the day, Frederick augured was not likely to be productive of danger, yet a proper degree of caution might be necessary to guard them against surprises from a superior number of persons; for he still adhered to the idea of its being the rendezvous of some lurking or proscribed people; and having once smarted under the lash of such, he thought it right to be forearmed in the case, and therefore took the liberty of borrowing a pair of his uncle's travelling pistols for the occasion. These, after priming and loading, he secretly deposited about his person, and accompanied by his friend, he fearlessly set out upon what he hoped would prove the final expedition.

The tide, as they had expected, when they reached the river, was fast receding, and consequently the water low, which exactly suited their purpose; when proceeding

ceeding to search for their little shallop, they found it sunk low in the reeds and sedges that garnished the river's banks, when once more taking possession, they hastily steered towards the object of their destination.

From the ebbing of the tide, the space immediately before the little postern had been left nearly dry, which circumstance enabled the adventurers to obtain a firm footing—an object of material consequence, should the door, as they feared, resist their united efforts to open it. The entrance, towards which they had now steered their course, was an excavation through the solid rock, on which the castle was founded, and consisted of a low ribbed arch, scarcely sufficient in height for a child of ten years of age to have passed through. This was filled up by a door, apparently constructed of oak, and of an immense thickness, which had been covered with a sheet of iron, and thickly studded with broad-headed nails, in order to produce a greater

greater degree of security. Part of this door, notwithstanding its immense strength, seemed gone to decay; the iron had fallen away with rust, and instead of having immense fastenings to contend with, they found it give way upon its creaking hinges almost with a touch. To enter then into these subterranean passages was all that now remained, when Frederick, stepping foremost, and grasping one of the pistols, while he presented the other to his friend, darted into the obscure vacuity which awaited him beyond.

All was now profound gloom, save the small degree of light admitted from the open door, and which was just sufficient to render it "darkness visible." Cautiously therefore they continued to feel their way along a narrow passage, which apparently led beyond the walls of the castle, when suddenly striking their feet against some impediment, and stooping to examine as to what had thus impeded their

progress, they discovered a flight of steps leading upwards; these they gradually ascended to a considerable height, when they were agreeably surprised by a glimmering light at the top, which, on their nearer approach, appeared to issue through the crevice of a broken door. Here the friends deemed it expedient to stop and reconnoitre a little before they ventured to proceed any farther. All around them was still as death. Not a sound was to be heard, save the throbbing of their own pulses, as they stood listening in almost breathless agitation, when it was at length agreed between them to force this barrier also, and which, like the former, shewed very little resistance. This done, they now found themselves in a square paved court, lighted by a small grated aperture at the top, which led them to conjecture they were now on the ground-floor of the castle, and from whence they continued to proceed through several passages simi-

lar

lar to the first; but not a vestige of any human being had as yet met their inquiring eyes.

"Here," said Frederick, "if any of my old acquaintance thought proper to reside, they might do it in full security, and be very well sheltered into the bargain, as the building still remains firm on this side, you see."

"True," answered Meillard; "but from the continued silence that reigns around, I should scarcely suppose it could boast of possessing any inhabitants."

"From whence then the light and the figure," questioned Frederick, "the appearance of which we have ourselves so recently witnessed?"

"That I am totally unable to account for," replied the other. "However, it does not appear to me at present that we shall return much the wiser for our excursion; for I can perceive no further egress from these solitary vaults, and therefore conjecture we shall be obliged to re-

trace our steps back again; consequently here ends our peregrination."

Just as Meillard had done speaking, a loud sneezing, as if from some person above their heads, echoed through the building, and attracted their attention.

"Hark!" eagerly exclaimed Frederick; "that there is some one here besides ourselves is now certain; let us therefore, my dear Meillard, proceed with caution, and by stealing upon them unawares, we may perhaps be able to overpower them, even if they are superior to us in number."

From having now continued some time under ground, their eyes became more accustomed to the privation of light, and by that means they were enabled to see much clearer than when they first entered the caverns. Thus, upon a second investigation, after a minute search, they discovered a small opening in one of these courts, half concealed by some rubbish which seemed to have lately fallen in; through this, to their great joy, they discovered

covered a narrow flight of stone steps. These they mounted without hesitation, and were rejoiced, after an ascent of some difficulty, to find themselves in a long winding passage open to the light of day. Here they wandered some time amongst mutilated walls, dismantled rooms, falling chimneypieces, and all the dismal *et-cetera* pointed out by the mouldering finger of time, when their attention was called to the remains of a wide, dark, stone staircase, as having something uncommon in its appearance, and prompted by curiosity to see where it led to, they both ascended it together. At the top of the stairs they perceived the remains of the stone flooring to what had once been a magnificent room, the walls of which were indeed standing, but there was no roof to shelter it from the inclemencies of the weather; and the contrast of what this apartment once was, and what it had become, struck alike on the senses of both; and they were just going to moralize on the effects of time, when,

as they were turning to take a further survey of the dilapidations, Frederick's eye was caught by a small modern-looking door in one side of the wall. This, by a sign, he immediately pointed out to his companion, when both, actuated by the same impulse, quickly proceeded towards it.

Caution, which had hitherto kept them on tiptoe, was instantly banished; they thought only of securing the game they had so long been in pursuit of, and the lock immediately gave way under the impatient hand of Frederick, when, to their unspeakable astonishment, they beheld themselves in a small but elegantly-furnished modern-looking apartment.

The transition from devastation and ruin to modern ease, if not elegance, was singularly striking, and had all the effect which the wand of a powerful magician might have been supposed to produce, and for a moment both stood suspended by wonder; but their surprise was still

to

to be increased by what was exhibited within.

From a small table, covered with books, implements for writing, &c. apparently alarmed by their hasty intrusion, started a man, who, on advancing towards them, deposited a miniature he was contemplating in his bosom. In his person the stranger was tall, pale, and thin, whilst a haggard wildness, a disordered air, and a desponding demeanour, marked him as a being not at peace with himself, whatever he might be as to the rest of the world, and at the same time proved an index of his present situation. That he was a courter of solitude was evident; and it was also evident that here he could enjoy it in its wildest vagaries; for

> "A spot so desolate and wild
> Might charm sad fancy's mournful child,"

without the remotest idea of ever experiencing interruption. What then must have been his surprise at sight of the intruders,

truders, who had so unceremoniously broken into his presence!

Frederick, who stood foremost, at sight of this singular-looking person, endeavoured to make excuses for their having so abruptly surprised him, but he only seemed to bewilder himself in the attempt; when Meillard, seeing him at a loss, was anxious to supply the deficiency by taking up the thread of the apology, which he hoped to render effective by simply explaining the reasons which had led them to trespass so abruptly on his privacy.

Here the recluse, with "a countenance more in sorrow than in anger," replied, that no apologies were necessary, and that, as his retreat had been discovered through his own inadvertency, he must be content to abide the loss of it, however strong the regret he might experience in consequence.

The friends lost no time in assuring the recluse of their inviolable secrecy, in regard

regard to their discovery, binding themselves by the most solemn promises never to divulge the circumstance to any human being.—"This," continued Frederick, "we owe you as an atonement for our unwarrantable curiosity; and I trust you will believe me sincere in the assertion."

"Young man," said the stranger, "in a pensive tone, "there is something so persuasive in your manner, that I cannot refuse to give credence to your words; and since you promise that you will not betray my secret, I will be content to retain possession of my fanciful retreat. It is one I have claimed acquaintance with for many a year," added he, with a sigh; "and to leave it now would be like parting with an old friend. *Friend!* did I say? The word certainly escaped my lips," continued he, with a thoughtful brow. "Yet what have I to do with so deceitful an appellation?"

During this period the eyes of Meillard

lard had not been idle, but, on the contrary, were fully employed in travelling from the figure of the stranger to the circle of the apartment, when, according to his comprehension, it consisted of a portion of the stone court through which they had just passed. On one side was a tolerably large modern window, which opening into a high dismantled turret, that afforded light from the top, had hitherto passed unobserved by rambling spectators. On the outside of the window flourished several pots of beautiful exotics, amongst which were some whose creeping foliage heightened the deception, by indiscriminately intermingling with the ivy and other wild shrubs which crept over the ruins. Around the walls, which were neatly stained within, hung several excellent paintings; whilst a few morceaux of the fine arts were tastefully placed in small niches between, giving an elegant and unique effect to the whole.

The conversation, if such it might be termed,

termed, consisting of apologies and broken sentences, drawing to conclusion, the friends thought proper to take their leave, and were preparing to depart, when Frederick turning for that purpose, a slanting ray of light which broke vividly through a loop-hole of the turret, fell on a portrait behind the door, and presented to his astonished sight the hideous countenance of his *ci-devant* enemy, the *cripple Ambrose.*

An exclamation of surprise, tinged with horror, escaped him; too well acquainted with the frightful lineaments to be mistaken, he could not resist the impulse he felt to inquire if the original of that picture was still in existence?

"My good young man, what can you possibly know concerning the wretched original of that picture," demanded the recluse, "since it is not at all likely that he could ever have been known to you?"

"All I know of the matter is, my good sir," replied Frederick, "that a person, calling

calling himself Ambrose, and bearing the identical stamp of that painting, stole me, when I was a child, from my uncle's house, and afterwards kept me for a twelvemonth with a gang of gipsies, with whom he himself cohabited."

"Is it possible," said the stranger, in a hollow tone, "that he could ever have ventured to England? and for what purpose could he molest this young man?" Then turning to Frederick—"May I," he continued, "without being guilty of impertinence, demand your uncle's name?"

"Certainly—Sir Hugh Singleton."

"Of Myfod Vale?"

"The same."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, whilst an indefinite kind of expression spread over his countenance; "then at Myfod Vale I will ere long see you again; till when, farewell!"

"*Farewell!*" instantly responded both the friends; and in a few minutes they had again threaded the vaulted passages, and

and uninterruptedly regained their boat below.

CHAPTER V.

Food for conjecture was not wanting, either to Frederick Singleton or his companion on their return home. Each had their surmises upon the extraordinary discovery they had witnessed, and each entertained different opinions as to what was to be the result.

Frederick asserted that the solitary occupier of the ruined turret was a person who must have been crossed in *love*, that his mistress had duped him, and that, in shunning the fair sex, he had fallen into the extreme of misanthropy—that of shunning the society of human beings altogether.—"Beside," added he, "I am the rather convinced of this, because there

was

was so much of softness mixed with the melancholy that oppressed."

Love is a great harmonizer of the manners, as well as the feelings, in some cases, I allow," said Meillard, with a smile at his pupil's definition of the tender passion; " but I am rather inclined to believe him some visionary enthusiast, who having fixed his standard of happiness too high to obtain it in this life, has lost his equilibrium altogether."

" There is certainly something wonderfully romantic in the circumstance," replied Frederick, musing; " I wonder if we shall ever see him again."

" I am inclined to think we may," said his friend; " for there is, no doubt, a degree of mystery attached to the portrait you recognized as being that of your old tormentor, which I should imagine, from the peculiarity of expression that marked his countenance when you mentioned him, he would have no objection to have elucidated. It is my opinion, therefore, that he

regard to this singular personage. The only opinion he could express upon the subject was, that it must be some person, either insane, or whose affairs might have rendered a temporary concealment necessary: however, that he might not be disappointed of the sight of one who boasted no common character, he instantly gave orders that if any stranger should call to inquire for him, he should have immediate admittance.

Expectation was now exalted on tiptoe for several days; still no stranger made his appearance, and all hope of seeing him, as the young men were debarred by their promise from making any efforts on their part for that purpose, was fast receding, when one morning, as they were preparing for their accustomed ride, a *stranger* was announced, as wishing to speak with sir Hugh Singleton. In a moment the whole party stood suspended in expectation of they knew not what, when the door of the

the apartment was thrown open, and they beheld, in *proprid personâ*, the recluse of the castle!

The tall, spectre-like appearance which now saluted them, was entirely unknown to sir Hugh; nor could he tax his memory with having ever beheld him till that moment; yet he did not feel himself absolutely at ease, as the large full eyes of the figure before him were employed in taking a survey of his person with the most scrutinizing effect; and which survey he only ceased, to take possession of a seat offered him by Frederick.

An awkward silence seemed for a moment to prevail, when it was broken by the *stranger's* saying—"I believe I have the pleasure of addressing sir Hugh Singleton?" bowing, as he spoke, to the baronet.

"The same, sir, at your service;" when the stranger continued—

"You will pardon my intruding thus abruptly upon you, but I come in quest of a little

a little information, which I believe it is in the power of this young gentleman to give me." Looking at Frederick. "Besides," added he, with a languid smile, whilst a hectic of a moment passed across his cheek, "I should commit a solecism in good manners, were I not to return the visit with which he honoured me."

It was now Frederick's turn to colour, which he did the scarlet's deepest dye, as he reflected upon his rudeness in so forcibly entering the retreat of the person before him—a rudeness which the concomitant suspicions by which he had been actuated, he felt could scarcely palliate.

Passing over the youth's visible confusion, the stranger proceeded to address him in regard to the exclamation that escaped him at sight of the portrait in the ruined castle, adding—"It is a subject in which I feel myself most deeply interested; the person to whom I allude, and whom I recollect you called *Ambrose*, has been known to me many years; and the slightest

slightest information concerning him, on your part, cannot fail to be satisfactory."

Frederick, thus called upon, began to relate the occurrences of his boyish days, commencing from the time when he first beheld the cripple at St. Amands—a circumstance that had made too deep an impression on his memory for time ever to erase. He then proceeded to detail the transaction at the summer-house, with his being forcibly carried by this miscreant to reside amongst the gipsies; his subsequent escape from them, when he left Ambrose sick in the hovel, &c. To this detail his attentive auditor lent a willing ear; but when he found Frederick could trace this miscreant no farther, and all hope of ascertaining his fate through this means had failed, the air of lively attention with which he had hitherto listened was changed into his customary pensive one, whilst deep sighs issued from his breast, and he again appeared absorbed in his own melancholy abstractions.

For a few minutes the silence that prevailed remained unbroken; each would have thought it almost sacrilege to have interrupted a reverie in which all the powers of his soul seemed involved; and this, to them, now interesting being might have continued to muse on in tranquillity, had he not by a sudden recollection roused himself from the stupor which was fast overwhelming him, by making an apology for his absence by saying—"I had hoped, through your means, my young friend, to have acquired the intelligence I have so long and so vainly sought—intelligence to me the most desirable; but denied this satisfaction, I must endeavour to sustain the disappointment with fortitude and resignation, not doubting but that Being who has bruised us, will, in his own good time, bind up our wounds for ever!"

Sir Hugh, in order to break through the sombre veil which was fast enveloping the whole party, now requested Frederick would pull the bell and order up refreshments;

ments; all of which, however, the stranger declined tasting; but to convince the party that he wished to continue upon terms of friendship with them in future, he begged the baronet would now and then allow him to intrude upon the comforts of his fireside, adding, while a sickly smile stole over his pallid countenance—"There is something so attractive in the appearance of this juvenile being," turning towards Frederick as he spoke, "that I feel myself almost irresistibly drawn towards him; and as it is a long time since I had any thing in the shape of a human being to love, I trust you will have the charity not to damp this new-born ardour, and especially when I add, that it may tend in future to sweeten the cup of an existence which has hitherto been drugged to the very bottom with the bitterest evils of human life."

Frederick's eyes glistened with the tear of sympathy at this melancholy address; and while he assured the stranger of the

sincerity of his esteem, he added a cordial welcome to him at all times. This was immediately echoed by sir Hugh, when, apparently gratified by so kind a reception from both parties, he arose to take his leave, when uniting hands in the close pressure of good fellowship, he bade them adieu for the present.

Silence seemed to have thrown her spell over all three for some minutes after the stranger's departure; each had been particularly struck, not more by the singularity of his appearance than the mode of his address, and each continued to muse on the impression he had made on their respective feelings. Frederick was already become quite an enthusiast in his favour; he felt certain, from the benevolent tones of his voice, and the suavity of his manners, that he must at all times have been amiable, kind, and good; and as such, deserving of his warmest commiseration. Sir Hugh, with feelings a little blunted by time, felt undecided as to the judgment

judgment he should form in regard to so singular a person, whose actions, in some points, he still thought bordered on insanity; and although not quite so credulous as the youthful Frederick, to give him credit for the possession of every virtue, neither was he so much of the stoic as to brand him with every vice. That he had been unfortunate, sir Hugh believed; but whether the colour of his destiny had originated in his own imprudence, or in the villainy of others, he must leave: at all events, he was now become an object of compassion; and that charity which demands pity and assistance from one Christian towards another, forbade him in this instance to withhold either. The stranger then from this period was considered as a welcome visitor at Myfod Vale, where the business that had first brought them acquainted never being alluded to by him, politeness forbade the mention of it by others, and he consequently remained as they had met, with no other appellation

than that by which he was at first distinguished, namely—the *stranger!*

The time now approached when Frederick's heart beat high with curiosity and expectation, as he contemplated in idea the arrival of lady Ap-Howel, and his *ci-devant* cherished little playmate. But he reflected, since they met—

> " Years had roll'd on, and fast they speed away,
> To those that wander as to those that stay;"

and knowing himself to be much altered in person since that period, curiosity prompted him to inquire what was now the figure and appearance of Love. Was she also much changed? or should he find the beautiful flaxen tresses bound around her polished brow, in the same style of simplicity that marked her infant years? Would the linsey-woolsey jacket, pretty even in rusticity, still envelop her fragile form—would the darling little feet be seen peeping from beneath it—or, above all, would she still evince the same innocent affection

affection which she had shewn him during their residence under the same roof? These were questions that would arise as often as the subject of his aunt's arrival occurred, and which *time* alone was left to solve.

The bustle indicative of receiving company now prevailed at Myfod Vale; and already had Frederick received the welcome summons to meet the travellers on the road, and arranged his costume for the morrow, when, as he stood reckoning the heavy hours that must intervene, and at the same time contemplating a heavy shower of rain that was just falling, he observed a lady on horseback galloping furiously through it, in whom he soon recognized his mother.

"What a pity it is that fine weather should ever do any hurt!" exclaimed Mrs. Singleton, as bounding from the back of her galloway, she rushed into Frederick's arms, already extended to receive her, whilst the dripping effects of the storm

visible in every part of her dress.—
elieve I am properly drenched to the
and as it is necessary to take care of
ɔer one, I shall e'en run to the kitchen
nd dry myself."

ederick, although not exactly agree-
ɣith his parent in her wise axiom re-
ng the weather, was still sorry to see
eavy and lowering clouds, which he
ght portended a stormy day, and per-
its fellow on the morrow; and his
ghts were fast settling on the travel-
when Mrs. Singleton joined him, in
r a more comfortable trim than when
ad disappeared so expeditiously.

o, Fred," she began, "here are grand
s, I find, in honour of your aunt's ar-
well, it is a long lane that has no
ng, and she has been a long time in
ıg to see us; but though last, not
as the saying is, for I understand she
ery great lady; hey, Fred, is it not

ly aunt, madam," returned Frede-

rick, "is an amiable and good woman—one that was exceeding kind to your son when he was at Howel Castle, and one whom my mother has only to know, in order to love and admire as much as I do."

"May be so; but the proof of pudding, you know," added she, smiling and nodding significantly, as if she still doubted his assertion; then, as if wishing to turn the subject, she continued.—"And pray does her pet, the little wild mountaineer, accompany her in her journey hither?"

Frederick felt the colour, in a tell-tale glow, mounting to his cheeks, while "*the little mountaineer*," and the tone in which it was uttered, created a sensation in his throat that impeded the answer which the question demanded, and from which he was luckily relieved by the entrance of his uncle, who came very opportunely to *hide* the confusion under which he laboured.

"*The little mountaineer!*" repeated Frederick,

derick, whilst something like indignation was fast rising in his bosom, and the fear that his young preserver might not be so cordially received as he wished, gave an excruciating pang to his heart.—Was it *love* that engendered this? was it friendship? was it gratitude? or all three combined? I know not; time alone can tell what it was,

CHAPTER VI.

With a heart palpitating in expectation of he knew not what, Frederick arose with the lark, in order to prosecute his journey; and as the wheels of his carriage bounded lightly along, he threw himself back, and closing his eyes, in order to shut out external objects, was soon lost in a retrospection of those within.

Again did memory, faithful to the past, carry

carry him back to the period when he became the unwilling captive of the horrid Ambrose—again did the terrific Crampton-text glare upon him with his lurking eyeballs, indicative of fraud and malice; and again did the old gipsey-man, though apparently harmless in his general conduct, stand with the rest of the dark fraternity in terrific array before him. From this scene, harrowing in its remembrance, fancy took a bounding leap to the rocky solitudes of the deep and narrow ravine. Here he again heard the silvery tones of that infant voice which struck so sweetly on his ears, whilst he derived the idea of self-preservation from its sounds; and again did the form of the dear venerable dame, as she kindly bade him welcome, start before him in imagination, and with it the remembrance of the many happy hours he had spent in her secluded habitation. Lost in reveries so interesting, time and space passed equally unheeded by the entranced Frederick; and the carriage was

drawing up to the place of appointment, when he was aroused by a voice issuing from one of the inn windows, exclaiming —"It is Lion!" as the dog, who had outstripped the horses, approached. It was now a matter of competition, whether the dog or his master should first salute the fair hand held out to receive them; but as Lion bounded into the parlour, at the sound of the still-remembered voice, Frederick leaped from the carriage, and seizing one hand, while the sagacious animal licked the other, left no odds between them.

To find Love increased in stature as well as himself, our hero had expected. There was also a latent hope that she would be as pretty as when he last saw her. Of her goodness and continued sweetness of disposition, he could have no doubt, as those qualities he knew were inherent in her, and she had not, he trusted, had sufficient intercourse with the world to bias or extinguish them; how, therefore, was he enchanted

enchanted to behold her all that the fond eye of fancy could wish, or the greatest epicure in female beauty could desire!

Those charms which Frederick only remembered in the bud were now expanding, and even gave promise of greater luxuriance when arrived at maturity. That sylph-like form, which he used to love to contemplate, was now become elegance personified; and "*the little mountaineer*," as his mother had deridingly called her, possessed a sufficient share of natural grace to decorate a courtly belle; while in her soft smile and *naïveté* of manners lurked fascination's self. Alas, poor Frederick! already more than half prepared to surrender, how shall thy heart resist such an assemblage of charms! It could not resist; and before the travellers arrived at Myfod Vale, a bond of affection had united them, which if broken, would prove the bane of their existing happiness.

"Here they come!" cried Mrs. Singleton, who was watching the arrival of the party

party from the drawing-room windows on minute, and expressing her fears that th dinner would be overdone the next, "her they are, brother!" she continued to ex claim, "just in time to save the venison! while she endeavoured to get a peep fron the corner of the window, as sir Hugh flew to hand them from the carriage "Well, I declare," she whispered to her self, "there's lady Ap-Howel! how wel she looks! and an elegant-looking young lady with her—who can she be, I wonder? When the query was soon reduced to a certainty by the entrance of the party and the introduction of Love, as her lady ship's and sir Hugh's joint *protégée*.

The grateful girl, who was now of an age to recollect the baronet's drawing her from the obscurity that was likely to over whelm her, and placing her with her be loved patroness, with tearful eyes expressed her gratitude to both, while she with grace added—"Insensible indeed must be my heart, if it ever refuses to retain a proper remembrance

remembrance of so infinite an obligation."

"You owe me no obligation, my sweet child!" said sir Hugh, taking her hand, and regarding her affectionately while he spoke; "it was to cancel a debt of gratitude, which I owed to you in concert with your good dame, for your kindness to our wanderer, that I besought lady Ap-Howel's kindness in your behalf; and I trust, if I have any skill in deciphering the human countenance, that you have richly repaid her for so readily complying with my request."

"Yes, indeed she has," replied her ladyship. "I had no children of my own, you know, and as Providence has infused a certain portion of tender affections into every human breast, so every one feels the imperious necessity of loving something; and those who are unfortunately debarred the pleasure of bestowing these affections on creatures of their own species will condescend to lavish them on brutes; hence the

the number of pet dogs, cats, monkeys, &c. But, thanks to this dear girl, *I* have been saved from such a degradation by bestowing my affections upon her, and I shall never cease to value her accordingly."

"My noble-minded benefactress!" cried Love, as she precipitated herself into the expanding arms of lady Ap-Howel, and hiding her face in her bosom, "who but thyself would thus generously become a debtor for benefits conferred; oh! that it may be the study of my future life, in some measure, to repay thy unexampled kindness!"

"Where is the good of all this fine speechifying, I wonder," muttered Mrs. Singleton. "I am certain the venison will be roasted to a scrip, and then Josiah will not be able to touch a bit, for he hates things overdone, and nobody here seems to think any thing about dinner:" when, to put an end to her doubts, and ease her suspicions, she had the satisfaction of hearing the first course was placed upon the table,

table, and witnessing the venison in very fine order.

"The delicate and intoxicating sensations," says a modern author, "which attend the first delicious emotions of the tender passion, rush on the imagination with violence, to which even the energy of youthful ambition is feeble and impotent in comparison;" and to the truth of this assertion Frederick was now become a proof. The ardent affection which he had conceived for the lovely girl, now an inhabitant beneath the same roof, which in a manner had grown with his growth, although imperceptible even to himself, now appeared to form a part of his existence; and rather than yield it, he could be content to yield every brilliant prospect of his future life. That he should meet with opposition to this darling wish of his soul—the wish of for ever calling her his, he had every reason to suspect. His mother's *little mountaineer*, like Banquo's ghost, was for ever rising to his terrified

rified imagination; and his uncle, whose *heir* he knew he was destined to be, would not he also object to his wealth and title being bestowed upon one not only poor, but even without a name, although that one was in every other respect the most unexceptionable?

These were questions which constantly agitated the stricken heart of Frederick, even though he beheld the idol of his affections the acknowledged favourite of those whom he wished most to conciliate; and in the midst of this perplexity he would frequently exclaim, with his favourite poet—

> "That Love had arrows, well I knew,
> Alas! I found them poison'd too!"

and cannot help writhing under the tortures they have inflicted."

"Well, who should have thought it?" would Mrs. Singleton frequently exclaim, after contemplating the elegant and graceful figure which Love presented as she moved

moved before them; "who should have thought that the poor little wild thing I so often heard them talk about could have been half so accomplished as she is? But, *as the tree is fashioned,* so 'twill grow; and had she fallen into other hands than those of lady Ap-Howel, she might have been as ignorant as a Hottentot: lucky enough for her that it fell out otherwise! Then, as her ladyship is so fond of her, it must be—*love me, love my dog*; and of course we can't help taking notice of her also; though she is engaging enough on her own account too, and very modest and pretty-behaved into the bargain."

At such times Frederick, to conceal the anguish of feelings occasioned by these cursory remarks, would snatch up his hat, and by retreating into the most secluded part of the grounds, endeavour to hide from every eye the acuteness of the sorrow which they occasioned him. At others

hers he would deprive himself of the heart-
elt pleasure which the society of this
nteresting being afforded him, by absent-
ing himself for hours from her presence,
in the vain hope, that by so doing, he
might weaken the attachment that im-
pelled him so strongly towards her; when
at such times the deserted girl would
wonder what could so much engage him
abroad, whilst she sent many an inquir-
ing look and wish after him till his re-
turn, when her cheek would again glow
with delight, and her eye sparkle with a
double portion of its usual lustre.

From the period of her residence with
lady Ap-Howel, Love had been in the
habit of accompanying her benefactress in
her morning rides; and nothing could ex-
ceed the grace of her agile figure when
mounted on horseback. This exercise
she was particularly fond of; and it had
been Frederick's care to provide horses,
properly trained, for both ladies, and i

was his delight to escort them, whenever the weather would permit, round the lovely environs of Myfod Vale.

Returning one morning after a delightful excursion of this sort, as they drew near the precincts of the park, they came in contact with a party of soldiers, who had just wound round an angle in the road. They appeared to be in no particular order of march, but were footing it on indiscriminately, and laughing and talking each *à son gré*, except one, who was silent, and who, rather extraordinary to say, was carrying an infant about a year old in his arms. Upon a nearer approach of the party, the beauty of the child, together with the novelty of its situation, could not fail to attract the eyes of the ladies, as they pulled up their horses to let them pass. This the soldier observing, he raised his eyes, in order to make a slight acknowledgment, when a sentence of approbation on the cleanliness of the child escaped the lips of lady Ap-

Howel,

Howel, and produced a more profound bow, with a look of smiling gratitude.

The cast of countenance exhibited by the soldier at this moment seemed perfectly familiar to the mind's eye of Frederick, yet he could not recall the when or where he had ever seen it before; still it dwelt on his imagination, as connected with some circumstance that was not to be obliterated from the tablets of his memory, and he regretted that he had not stopped and spoken to him one moment, while he felt an inclination to turn back and follow him the next. But how to leave the ladies to return by themselves, or how to account to them for the whim by which he was so suddenly actuated, he knew not, when Love luckily furnished him with the excuse he wanted, by exclaiming—"How fatigued must that poor man be, thus to march with that infant in his arms, if he is under the necessity of keeping pace with his comrades! and the little creature too," bestowing a sigh of

of commiseration as she spoke, "perhaps it has no mother to guard its helpless infancy; and if it has come a long way——"

"True, dear Love," cried Frederick, interrupting the sentence she was about to utter, "it must want refreshment; and if you are not afraid to return by yourselves, I will take care and procure it some ere it has proceeded much farther."

"Afraid! certainly not," repeated both ladies in a breath; "besides, we could not think of preventing you," said his aunt, "from flying on the wings of charity to perform a good action; so now, my young Mercury," added she laughing, "to horse and away, while we pursue our way quietly homewards."

"Pray what is become of your beau, sister?" asked sir Hugh, who was sauntering in front of the house, watching for their return. "No accident I hope has occurred to detain Frederick from accompanying you?"

"Oh, no," cried her ladyship, in a lively tone,

tone, "I can assure you all is well, and our chivalrous escort only gone upon a little expedition, in order to succour the distressed, and so left us to find our way home by ourselves; but you will soon see him again. In the meantime, how stands your larder? I hope you are well provided, as I have a shrewd guess you will have more company than you expect to dinner."

"Company!" repeated sir Hugh, "I know not whom, as we have had most of our friends lately," when he paused, as a suspicion came over him, from the significant expression of her ladyship's countenance, that it might be the *stranger* at the castle. Yet, that Frederick should have betrayed his secret in discovering him, he could scarcely credit; when his conjectures were rather increased than diminished, by observing his nephew winding towards the house, and apparently escorted by a party of military.

A few minutes more brought them *vis-à-vis*

à-vis with the master of the mansion, when Frederick, apologizing for the liberty he had taken, ventured to introduce the whole troop, and to request that they might be accommodated with some refreshment, as they appeared to have undergone a long march.

This sir Hugh, smiling at Frederick's eagerness, readily granted; when, being desired to seat themselves, they were soon divested of their accoutrements, and regularly placed on the grass, except the one who bore the infant, and he, by Frederick's desire, was, with his young charge, conducted to the interior of the mansion.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL now was bustle and activity at Myfod Vale. Sir Hugh gave immediate orders for plenty of ale, with the contents of the pantry and larder, to be distributed amongst the brave fellows who had so lately volunteered their lives in our service; and while the domestics were cheerfully employed in executing their master's commands, Frederick, intent only on the soldier whose lineaments had so particularly struck his memory, followed him to the servants' hall, whither he had been remanded.

The poor fellow was about to unfasten the strap which, passing over his shoulder, had assisted in the support of the infant, as Frederick entered; he looked pale, and seemed sinking with fatigue; but when he embraced his child, a sickly smile stole over

over his pensive countenance, and he looked as if that single embrace had power to repay him for all his sufferings. Provisions for himself and infant were quickly spread before him, and while they continued to regale themselves, our hero could not help caressing the lovely infant whilst it gambolled in its father's arms. In doing this the threadbare habiliments of the poor soldier caught his eye, which in some parts were too scanty for the limbs they were meant to protect, whilst in others an exuberancy prevailed, from which the scanty portions might have been supplied, and which gave proof that they were not fabricated for their present wearer. Upon regarding him more attentively, the hard-earned badge of honour and meritorious service was discovered, proudly pendent from his button-hole, supported by a plait of rich auburn hair around his neck.

This caught Frederick's eye, and addressing him, he said—"You have served

abroad, my friend, I see, by your medallion: for which of your hard-fought battles did you obtain it?"

"For the battle of Waterloo, your honour," he replied, in a tone that bespoke modesty and candour. "I was in the first regiment of light dragoons, to whose courage and bravery in beating Buonaparte's *imperial guards*, the fortune of the glorious eighteenth was principally owing, and for which service the prince regent was graciously pleased to reward us with this mark of distinction."

"That battle, though a *glorious one*, as you term it, must have been a dreadful scene of carnage?"

"Dreadful indeed, your honour," he replied, whilst a tear moistened his eye at the recollection; "and it is no misrepresentation when it is said, that the shoes of the troops were steeped in gore. I myself, after the battle, walked over the plains of Waterloo, and found the ground so drenched with the blood of men and horses,

horses, that my shoes were over the soles at every step."

"Were you long engaged in the action?" questioned Frederick.

"Not very long on the eighteenth, because our vigorous attack on the imperials, who bore down upon us almost as soon as we reached the field of battle, quickly settled the business; for Boney, seeing those upon whom he had the greatest reliance fall like shot before us, gave all up for lost, and taking flight, the victory was soon decided. But, your honour, our regiment, although it fought so nobly, had been sharply engaged the evening before. After marching quick on the seventeenth, from four in the morning till five in the afternoon, without tasting any kind of food, we drew up in a part of the road that skirted a large wood, and halted in order to obtain a little water, for we were all but famishing. Here we had not remained more than half an hour, ere we discovered that this very wood was

already occupied by a part of the French army, which we soon found were preparing to give us a rough salutation. Our commander, upon this discovery, instantly ordered us to load our muskets, and fix bayonets, then to make a vigorous push through the wood, hoping by these to gain possession of an eminence he believed to exist behind it, and he thought, if we gained, would great advantage to us in firing down the enemy. But in this conjecture was unfortunately mistaken; for had we cut our passage through than we discovered that the eminence was converted into a valley, consisting of cultivated chiefly filled with rye, some then at its full height, greatly impeded our passage. Here then, instead of obtaining an advantage, we lost it, and became, in consequence, exposed to the enemy's fire above us till nine o'clock at night, when it gradually ceased. Resistance being

being no longer necessary, we threw ourselves on the ground, in order to recruit our wearied limbs for an hour or two, when, as soon as it was light enough to enable us to distinguish, we made a hasty retreat, avoiding by that means the being cut in pieces, the French having every advantage over us, and arrived on the plains of *Waterloo* just in time to receive and conquer Buonaparte's boasted *imperials*."

"But I am afraid, in order to have achieved so noble an action, the slaughter amongst you must have been very great."

"Yes, sir, great indeed; our regiment alone returned eight hundred killed and wounded."

"Dreadful!" responded Frederick; "but I am happy to see that you have escaped uninjured."

"Not altogether, sir," replied the soldier, while a deep sigh heaved his bosom as he spoke. "I have been twice wounded; first in the memorable battle of ——, with sir James Graham, where I received a mus-

ket-ball through my leg; and at Waterloo I was again wounded in the shoulder."

"Well, my friend, your wounds are honourable, and you have no doubt been remunerated by a pension?" said Fredesick, emphatically.

"Not exactly so, your honour," replied he, mournfully. "Before my arrival in England, my wounds, through the care of a beloved wife, were in a fair way of healing; and believing that I could earn a decent livelihood, with God's assistance, as well as many hundreds reduced to the same situation with myself, I neither mentioned my wounds, nor applied for a pension, on my arrival in my native land. Since that period I have had the misfortune to lose my partner in affliction; after which, perhaps from neglect, my wounds have broken out afresh, and the doctors now tell me I shall never be capable of hard labour for my future support."

"Poor

"Poor fellow!" ejaculated Frederick, whilst a look of commiseration spread over his expressive countenance. "Poor fellow! and where is now your destination?"

"Our regiment was last week disbanded," answered the soldier, "and myself, with a party of my comrades, are on our way to Ireland, where a cheerless reception will no doubt meet many, as well as myself, on our return."

"And what plan do you think of putting in execution, as the most likely to enable you to obtain a subsistence for yourself and child?" inquired the compassionating Frederick.

"I think, sir," he replied, "of trying to keep a school. I have had a very good common education; and if I could meet with a little encouragement in that way, to make a beginning, I flatter myself that, with unremitted attention, I might be able to succeed."

"Well, my good fellow," exclaimed his

patient auditor, whose feelings had been wrought up to a high pitch of sensibility, by the mildness with which the poor soldier had related his tale, and the tear which he had observed trembling in his eye during the recital, "thou shalt not lack a friend to assist thee in thy honest endeavours, nor to procure thee a rightly-earned pension, if the interest of sir Hugh Singleton can prevail."

"*Sir Hugh Singleton!*" repeated the soldier, in a tone of surprise, whilst a singular expression of pleasure seemed to irradiate his pallid countenance. "May I take the liberty of inquiring if that gentleman dwells in this neighbourhood?"

"Certainly," replied Frederick, now astonished in his turn—"in this very mansion; but wherefore, my good fellow, do you ask me that question? Is it possible that you can know any thing of my uncle?"

"I only know that I was once very handsomely rewarded for a small piece of service

service I had the good luck to render him, for which I have always retained a grateful remembrance, though the situation of his residence, from the lapse of time, and other concomitant circumstances, had escaped my memory."

A light seemed now to dawn upon the bewildered mind of Frederick, which enabled him to account for the interest he took in the being before him, whilst, with eagerness, he hasted to ask if he was not the young soldier who, some ten years ago, had so kindly interested himself in the calamities of a sickly child, whom he discovered amidst a horde of gipsies in the wilds of Flintshire?

"It certainly was I, your honour," replied Charles Cuthbert, who now stood before Frederick as the wounded half-worn-out soldier, who, formerly struck by the miserable situation of the unfortunate child, had done all in his power to befriend him.

"In me," continued his auditor, "you behold that sickly boy, and the highly-

favoured nephew of sir Hugh Singleton, who, I am sure, will be ready to unite with me in any act of kindness that can lessen your distress. In the meantime, rest at ease; every attention shall be shown you, and you may depend upon my uncle's giving you still more substantial proofs of his hospitality."

Our hero had now made an interesting discovery; and with a light heart, and bounding step, he hastened towards his friends, who were engaged in watching their unexpected guests, as they heartily partook of the repast set before them, to communicate it.

"It is no wonder," added he, having finished his relation, "that I should feel myself so strongly impelled towards this man, whose kind regards, as they rested on me, beaming with compassion, have never been obliterated from my memory, although I was not precisely able to recognize his person. And now, my dear friends, what shall we do for the worthy creature

creature and his infant charge? We will have a council of war, at which your ladyship and my uncle shall preside, when I am sure something worthy of such cultivated heads, and benevolent hearts, will be struck out for his advantage."

"No flattery, young man," cried her ladyship, as the gay party on the green now rose to depart, after having merrily quaffed the nut-brown ale which sir Hugh had ordered them to the health of the donor, when the young soldier who had obligingly offered to be the bearer of Cuthbert's knapsack, that he might the better support his child, was given to understand that he would in future be spared that trouble; and with the intelligence a handsome douceur from the hands of Frederick, as a reward for his humane and considerate conduct.

The young man at first looked a little surprised; but when informed that his comrade had obtained better quarters than had of late been his lot to meet with, they all

all sincerely rejoiced, as he was generally beloved and respected amongst them; and with many a kind wish for his future prosperity, and a hearty shake of the hand, they bade each other farewell; and while his comrades journeyed on to seek a habitation and a name, the worthy Charles Cuthbert, for the present, found himself sheltered under the hospitable roof of sir Hugh Singleton.

But here, although in the possession of every comfort, and could "fight his battles o'er again" in peace, yet it was not designed that here he should remain to lead a life of inactivity and idleness; and as the baronet agreed with him in opinion, that a school would be the most eligible thing he could fix upon, which opinion was also sanctioned by lady Ap-Howel, the whole party immediately set about searching for a situation, and were not long in discovering what they sought, at the village of St. Amands. Here the long-known and highly-esteemed preceptor

tor of the youthful Frederick still dwelt, and for whom his *ci-devant* pupil still cherished the warmest regards, which he testified by his constant visits, and undiminished attentions; and by confiding to him their wishes and intentions respecting Charles Cuthbert, they were soon enabled, through his assistance, to put them in execution.

Here then was the soldier, after having spent his youth in the *tented field;* fixed in a situation that promised to reward him for past services, by procuring a comfortable independence for his approaching age.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIGHT shone the day in Frederick's eyes, when he first conducted Love and lady Ap-Howel to the neat-built school-house inhabited by Charles Cuthbert, in the delightful village of St. Amands. There, as he contemplated the solid comforts so liberally bestowed by the considerate sir Hugh, as the reward of an action kindly rendered to himself, he felt his heart expand with a double portion of gratitude towards this beloved relative, whilst his eyes sparkled with new-born delight, as he viewed the felicity expressed in the glowing cheek of the happy individual who now came out to meet them.

Modestly saluting the party as they arrived, the happy Cuthbert proceeded to show and expatiate upon the beauties and conveniencies

conveniencies of his dwelling, whilst the most grateful expressions of thankfulness flowed from his tongue, and mingled with the description.—"Observe, ladies!" he exclaimed, leading the way, and opening a neat little gate, "this is my poultry-yard, and how plentifully stocked it is, thanks to the generous hand that filled it! then do you see those two fine cows grazing in the beautiful meadow beyond? I am also instructed to call them mine, blessings on the donor! then —this way if you please, your honour —then here is a charming garden, and how sweet is the perfume of the flowers! oh! how will my darling Susan love to waddle about here when she gets a little older! and oh that her blessed mother had lived to see this day! what a recompence had it been for all her toils and troubles! But God's will be done," he added, meekly bowing his head, "and for all his mercies let *me* be thankful!"

After a few minutes silence given to the

the memory of his departed wife, Cuthbert again took up his subject, and continued to inform his gratified hearers that, through the interest of Mr. Bonus, he had already acquired several pupils, and was in daily expectation of adding to the number. The above gentleman, he also added, had kindly promised him his assistance in order to supply any deficiencies on his side.—"Thus supported," he continued, "I shall not fear falling; but, on the contrary, shall hope to add credit to the unlooked-for encouragement I have met with."

"I have no doubt of that," responded lady Ap-Howel; "for when once people form a resolution to be industrious, and to conduct themselves with propriety, they cannot fail of becoming respectable characters; and thence follows every thing they wish. But where is your little girl? you must favour us with a sight of her before we go."

"Certainly, she shall wait upon your ladyship

ladyship immediately:" when stepping out, the happy father soon returned with his cherub, blooming like the dawn, and a visible partaker of the late benefactions; when having kissed the child, and bestowed upon it some little tokens which Love had busied herself in preparing, the party took leave of the highly-gratified Cuthbert, while they themselves experienced the heartfelt pleasure which a generous action can never fail to reflect back upon its performer.

"What a delightful morning have we passed, dear sir Hugh!" cried Love, her cheeks blooming roses, and her eyes sparkling with delight, as she lightly tripped into the drawing-room, where sat her benefactor in conversation with a visitant, whom she, in her eagerness to give vent to her feelings, had not observed; "though it is rather warm I confess," she continued, throwing off her hat and gloves; "but who would not remain insensible alike to the effects of heat or cold, in order to witness

ness the gratifying spectacle which we have done?"

"May I ask, my dear," inquired sir Hugh, smiling at her earnestness, "to what fortunate circumstance you are indebted for this exuberancy of spirits and satisfaction, so suddenly acquired this morning?"

"Oh, we have all been making a visit to poor Cuthbert and his darling little baby," she replied, in an animated tone, while she adjusted her beautiful hair, regardless of any one being present except the baronet; "and Frederick is quite charmed, as well as myself, at beholding them so comfortable." Here, turning round, she abruptly stopped, at beholding a pair of dark eyes fixed upon her with the most scrutinizing regards, whilst the countenance to which they belonged seemed agitated almost to convulsion. In a moment the little colour that had enlivened the features fled, and a faint murmur of—"Gracious Heaven! what a striking resemblance!"

semblance!" burst from the trembling lips.

The intuitive feelings of delicacy convinced the astonished girl that she was, in some way or other, an object of disturbance to the person before her, although unable to account for it; and blushing scarlet deep, she in a moment gathered up her hat and gloves from the sofa on which she had carelessly flung them, and flew out of the room in a moment.

"And is she again fled?" inquired the *stranger;* for it was no other than him, who, after an absence of considerable length, had dropped in upon sir Hugh during their ride, as the closed door shut her from his sight; when passing his hand over his eyes, he added, in a subdued voice—"It is a vision, which, although a fair one, comes only to remind me of lost happiness—of days gone by, which exhibited nothing but misery, and I fear without one bright ray to gild the prospect in future." Then rising and turning to

to sir Hugh, he added—"My good friend, I feel myself suddenly indisposed—you will therefore excuse my thus abruptly quitting you." Then wringing the hand of his compassionating auditor, he left him to meditate on the singularity of such an adventure.

That the stranger could have any previous knowledge of, or had ever before seen, the young lady in question, reared as she had been in the remotest solitude impervious to every eye, sir Hugh would not believe. What was it then that could so visibly strike him in her sudden appearance? "To be sure," he argued, "there is that in her beautiful exterior, that might move even the heart of a stoic in her favour, and create an affection in the cold and guarded bosom of an anchorite; but here her presence had seemed to create more of horror than of admiration, more of pain than pleasure; and whence this contradiction? It could not arise, he became certain, from any previous knowledge

ledge he had of Love, but must eventually have arisen from her resemblance to some one in whom he was interested; and hence the association of ideas which had carried a painful sensation to his heart on beholding her. Thus arguing, sir Hugh prepared to seek the object of his ruminations.

Love, rather alarmed at the extraordinary sensation her presence seemed to have created in the unknown person she had beheld in the drawing-room, went immediately in search of lady Ap-Howel, to whom she related the circumstance. Her ladyship allowed such a rencontre was strange, "'twas passing strange;" but still no clue could be given towards the solution of such an enigma till they saw sir Hugh, and then she had no doubt but all would be satisfactorily explained. But here her ladyship had reckoned without her host. Sir Hugh, it was true, came to interrupt their *tête-à-tête*—came to inquire after their morning ride, to ask questions respecting

respecting the settlement of their favourite Cuthbert, in whom all had become interested; but not a syllable escaped him respecting his singular visitor.

To the stranger sir Hugh Singleton had formerly pledged his word for secrecy; it would therefore have been acting unworthy of the character of a man of honour, either to endeavour at discovering who he was, or to attempt the prying into griefs by him held sacred. The recent circumstance therefore seemed already as effectually banished from the mind of sir Hugh as if it had never occurred. But this was not the case with Love; her mind had received too deep an impression, both from the singularity of the occurrence, and the exclamation which burst forth on beholding her, to be easily effaced; and whilst she dwelt upon them in her mind, she forbore to mention the circumstance, even to Frederick, although she was prompted an hundred times a-day by recollection to inquire, " to whom can

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an isolated being like myself bear so striking a resemblance?" and as often, while breathing a sigh, her heart would respond, "to no one; the supposition only could have originated in a distempered brain, and the wild effusions of fancy sent it forth. Why therefore dwell upon a thing for which there is no rational foundation? and yet I cannot divest myself of the extraordinary and nameless sensations it has given birth to."

While thus reflecting, she would indulge a wish that she might again be permitted to behold a person who occupied so much of her thoughts; and many a solitary ramble did she take towards the different outlets of the park, in the hope of encountering him, but to no effect; when, sorrowful and subdued, she would retrace her steps, and brood in silence over her disappointment.

Returning one morning, after an unsuccessful ramble of this sort, she was surprised to see lady Ap-Howel, accompanied

by Frederick, approaching with an open letter in her hand.

"I fear I bring you unwelcome news, my dear girl," said her ladyship, on reaching her. "See here," presenting the epistle, "this comes to recall us to Howel Castle; and that immediately."

"To Howel Castle!" faltered Love, in a reluctant tone, whilst the consciousness of having acted wrong, in shewing a repugnance to return, crimsoned her face with blushes, whilst she felt a withering pang at her heart, occasioned by the unwelcome intelligence.

"But my dear aunt does not mean to say that she is really going home?" said Frederick, in a voice of alarm. "We really cannot part with you yet. Beside, what urgent reason can you have for leaving us, while sir Howel remains in town?" he added, with trembling eagerness.

"'Tis not on sir Howel's account, my dear nephew, that I wish to return home," replied

replied her ladyship, "but on that of his niece, Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, who writes me, that from peculiar circumstances which have lately occurred in her family, a residence with me for a few months would just now be very agreeable; and, as I make a point of paying every attention to sir Howel's relatives, I think it a duty incumbent on me, my dear Frederick, notwithstanding your long face and beseeching eyes, to be at home to receive her."

The name of Jeannette Ap-Griffiths came in terrors dark as the portending storm, which in falling severs the twining branches of the tender vine, or roots up the lovely rose which Love himself might have planted. It fell on the hearts of the young people like the baleful mildew on the young buds of affection, which each were cherishing in their bosom; and as they reached the house, "with measured step and slow," each thought a name so harsh,

so inharmonious, had never sounded in their ears.

To defeat the scheme of this meditated departure now occupied the mind of Frederick day and night. Persuasions to give up Miss Jeannette he knew would have no weight with his aunt; and so soon to lose the object which now clung closer than ever to his heart, was torture. Yet in this exigency, what could be done? To evince his eagerness for their stay, would only be to expose the deep interest he felt in the subject. This he feared to do, and yet to stand tamely by, and see them depart without making an effort to detain them, he felt would be impossible, even at the risk of betraying the sentiments by which he was actuated. At length, after a vast deal of deliberation upon so knotty a point, the lucky thought occurred of persuading his uncle, who he knew wished the continued stay of lady Ap-Howel as much as himself, to send

send an invitation for Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths to join the party at Myfod Vale.

Frederick, this brilliant idea glittering in his countenance, the next morning entered the breakfast-room, and having made known his wishes to sir Hugh, the proposal was carried *nem. con.;* when lady Ap-Howel also agreed, provided the invitation was accepted, to protract her visit to the first-mentioned period.

Content again reigned triumphant in every breast; and as the eyes of the younger party met, an expressive glance from each conveyed the satisfaction of their hearts.

Nothing now remained but to dispatch a special messenger with the important invitation, who carried with him the sincere wishes of all the party for its acceptance; and Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths became much less an object of dislike when considered as an inhabitant of Myfod Vale, than when divided by the extent of the principality.

And now we will leave the lady to perform her journey in the most commodious manner; and whilst she is travelling, our readers will give us leave to take a retrograde motion, in order to take a peep at an old friend, who glided past our visual optics in the early part of our performance, but whom we had not forgotten.

CHAPTER IX.

THEODORE Evans, by the demise of both his parents, was left master of himself and a handsome property, at a very early period of his life; and being unshackled by those domestic ties which frequently chain men to the spot where they were born for the remainder of their lives, he determined to take advantage of the liberty he enjoyed, and see what is commonly called the world.

world. Having therefore finished a brilliant education at one of the universities, where he had acquired a familiarity, not only with the dead languages, but most of the living ones also, he made arrangements accordingly, and at the age of twenty-two bade a willing adieu, for the present, to old England.

Teeming with youth, health, and spirit, the young traveller, after quitting England, first landed in France, where, though much amused by the *nonchalance* and careless gaiety which mark the national character, he observed too great a laxity of morals amongst its inhabitants to please him; and it was not in France that our fastidious traveller was destined to become the slave of beauty.

Quickly tired of a place, where all floated upon the surface of the understanding, and nothing sunk deep enough to touch his heart, he set out, with a design to visit some of the Italian states; but as it is not our intention to accompany him on

his journey, we will refer our readers to their geography for a description of his road, and content ourselves with quietly conducting him to Rome, where he arrived in equally as high spirits, and sound health, as when he commenced his tour.

Rome! once the majestic mother of cities, how art thou fallen! and how are thy proud palaces now humbled with the dust! Yet, in spite of the desolation that reigns among thy tottering ruins, thy proud pre-eminence is still visible, and must continue so, whilst it affords a confirmation of past events to the *historian*—a present gratification to the searching eye of the *antiquary*, and a useful lesson to the moralist, when he meditates upon the frailty of all sublunary things.

Thus apostrophized Theodore Evans, as he first surveyed the mingled beauty and decay of that once-superb city, where he meant, for some time, to take up his abode.

Dame Nature had infused into the composition

position of this young man, besides an inordinate love of music, a sufficient quantity of the tincture of romance, which led him frequently to see things reflected through that medium, and to seek adventures where no one besides himself would ever think of finding them. In no country could these propensities have found greater indulgences than in Italy. The heavenly softness of their music, the bewitching attractions of their females, conspired with the romantic appearance of all around to fascinate his senses. To him this was indeed a land of delight, a land flowing in reality with milk and honey.

Daily in the habit of perambulating the delightful environs of this still-celebrated city, Theodore Evans was led one morning to enter the tempting enclosures of the villa Borghese, which, on certain days, were held open for the gratification of the public. Here he beheld, as usual, different groups of both sexes regaling themselves under its refreshing shades.

In one recess he observed a party partaking of iced creams; in another coffee and fruits were the order of the day; whilst a third contained parties devoted to singing and music; added to these, numbers of fashionables were sauntering up and down, listening to the tuneful concert of the choristers above.

With the last-mentioned, having no party himself, he had indiscriminately mingled, and had enjoyed high satisfaction in viewing the different groups as he passed, when his ears were saluted by the sound of music at a distance, which appeared to proceed from a spot he had not yet visited. The silvery tones of a lute striking on his ears as he approached, possessed as much attraction for Theodore as Orpheus's lyre did of old for those who followed *him*, and he immediately proceeded in the direction from whence the sounds issued, when he had scarcely threaded the windings of a flowery thicket, ere he beheld a group seated on a grassy knoll,

knoll, *à la gipsy*, immediately before him.

Not liking to break in abruptly upon the party, he stood still, in order to reconnoitre a little, whilst the odoriferous shrubs by which he was surrounded concealed him from their view. Several ladies and gentlemen, of different ages and appearance, composed the set; but there was one female amongst them which seemed particularly to attract his attention. Her person appeared tall and commanding, but from her sitting posture he could not perhaps satisfactorily state her height. A pair of eyes, which, from their vivid brightness, seemed calculated to pierce all hearts, while their softness bid fair to secure them, irradiated a countenance of exact proportion. Teeth of the most regular construction and dazzling whiteness ornamented a lovely mouth, whose smile was fascination; whilst her fine open forehead, bound by tresses of the darkest hue, finished the contour of a face not to

be contemplated with impunity, at least by such gazers as our Englishman, who, if he had been a disciple of Mahomet, would have believed it to have been one of his fabled houris upon earth, and so believing, would have fallen down and worshipped the prodigy.

If such was the effect produced upon the wonder-struck Theodore at simply beholding the beautiful creature before him, what were his feelings, when, taking up her lute, which lay beside her on the grass, and touching its chords in a graceful symphony, she prepared to call forth its dulcet tones in an accompaniment to a still sweeter voice. Every sense seemed lost in the exquisite one of hearing; never had sounds so full, so sweet, so heavenly, before assailed him; and whilst they continued to vibrate on his ear, he could almost have believed himself in the regions of the blessed, where sounds of such mortal bearing are alone allowed to enter; but the harmony ceasing, the charm dissolved,

solved, and the enthusiast again became convinced he was still an inhabitant of this world.

The song finished, the party arose; and as he watched their departure from his concealment, Theodore beheld, with infinite satisfaction, the certainty that the figure of this interesting female corresponded with her face, and he could not help applying to her what Milton has so exquisitely said of the youthful mother of mankind, that

> " Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
> And in every gesture dignity and love;"

and when he saw her enter the carriage destined to convey her from this scene of festivity, he felt that on this bewitching creature must depend the happiness or misery of his future life.

To follow the enamoured Theodore through all the thrilling ecstasies of a newly-conceived passion, or to describe all the difficulties he encountered, in order to make

make that passion known to the beloved object who had inspired it, is needless to the subject; it will be sufficient to state, that the handsome young Englishman was considered too pleasing an object to be refused by even the beautiful Laurentina da Vinci; and that by perseverance, and the strength of his purse, he was enabled to combat the prejudices of her relatives, who at length permitted him, under certain religious restrictions, to lead his lovely bride-elect to the altar.

Happy in the possession of the most enviable blessing upon earth, years of content rolled imperceptibly away in the account of Theodore Evans. His Laurentina, equally attached with himself, was as amiable as she was beautiful; and to ward off every care which might disturb her husband's felicity, was ever her chief concern. During the first years of her marriage she had presented him with two children, a son and daughter, which, in order to fulfil the contract entered into

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on their marriage, were educated in different faiths—the son being brought up a Protestant, whilst the daughter imbibed the religious tenets of her mother; it being farther agreed also, that however necessary it might be thought for the son to visit England, the daughter should never quit Italy.

In this state time had fled on wings of down; sixteen summers had shed their roses in the paths of the *young* Theodore, when his father deemed it necessary that he should become acquainted with his paternal home, where his own presence was now much wanted, and where, though almost an alien himself, he hoped his son would not object to spend the greater part of his future days.

The prospect of seeing England, and what was more, that home so often spoken of by his father, was sufficiently tempting to the young mind of Frederick, to induce him to look forward with pleasure to such an excursion, although the quitting

ting his friends in Rome would cost him a pang of deep regret. His sister was dear to his heart; his beloved and still-lovely mother he held still dearer; yet there was one, a friend of his sister's, the lovely Olivia Valvino, who, growing with his growth, had so imperceptibly twined herself around his heart, that he felt, even at this early age, it would, but for the idea of a speedy return, be impossible to impose upon himself so cruel a separation.

The time at length arrived, when, with expanded sails, and prosperous gales, the father and son, after taking an affectionate leave of the dear ones left behind, set sail for Albion's happy shores; and when its white cliffs were visible in the glittering sunbeams, they communicated a sensation of delight to the *exile's* heart; for however an Englishman may neglect the place of his nativity, and leave it to wander in foreign climes during his youth, the natural love of his country never fails

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to return in maturer years, when to visit it again, to breathe his last sigh in its bosom, and to repose in peace with those of his relatives that have gone before, forms the grand ultimate of his earthly desires. With sentiments similar to these did Mr. Evans now again set foot on his long-deserted land.

Quick as the swiftest travelling equipage could convey them, the father and son posted down to Monmouthshire, when the hearts of both beat rapturously on their approach to the family domain; the one regarding it as the happy home of his infancy, in which he had grown to manhood, " loving and beloved," whilst the other was taught to look upon it as a home destined to afford him every felicity in future. Indulging these reflections, they were equally rejoiced when *Myfod Vale*, in all its primitive simplicity, burst upon their expecting sight.

Yes, reader, in Mr. Evans and his youthful

ful Theodore, now presented to your view, behold the former proprietors of Myfod Vale. The father, after an absence of eighteen years, again returned to the lands of his fathers, where he felt he should like to end his days, could he but persuade his Laurentina to share this happy abode; while the son, delighted with every thing he saw, was meditating years of future felicity, in which he might enjoy it with his beloved Olivia Valvino. Alas! how futile are the hopes of man! and on how sandy a foundation does he build his rock of happiness!

Man was not born to live alone, is an axiom allowed even from the earliest part of the creation; and although Theodore Evans had a companion in his father, he was not content. A void remained in his heart, which he felt must be filled with the sacred name of *friend*, one to whom he could freely communicate his thoughts, his wishes, his sentiments; in short, one with

with whom he could be upon an equality in point of age, and converse with him respecting Olivia.

Chance, which is sometimes said to favour the designs of mortals, soon presented him with what he sought. In the neighbourhood of Myfod Vale dwelt a family which, however they might be allowed to come within the pale of gentility, were not overburthened with riches, and how to make a suitable appearance, according to the rank they wished to hold in society, frequently puzzled them. Sometimes it was adroitly managed, by artfully paying court to people of open, generous dispositions; from thence frequently succeeded civilities, accompanied by presents, which, although trifling in the eyes of the donor, were considered of intrinsic value by the receiver, and appreciated accordingly. To a family such as this the arrival of the proprietor of Myfod Vale was an epoch worth recording

ing in their family annals; and the eldest son, who was nearly the same age as Theodore, was immediately directed to worm himself into his confidence. This, as he was exceedingly artful, and well practised in dissimulation, was easily effected; and a short time saw the wily Clarence Butteral, and the easy unsuspecting Theodore Evans, *bosom friends.*

The person of the young man who had taken such care to insinuate himself into the confidence of the unsuspicious Frederick was ordinary to a degree; not the *graces* only had refused to smile upon his birth, but dame Nature also had cast him in her roughest mould, which his small intercourse with the world had hitherto been unable to polish. But although she had dealt thus hardly with him in regard to personal defects, she still held a mental reservation in his favour; and whilst you listened to the honeyed accents of his tongue, and became bewildered in a maze

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of flowery fictions, wearing the garb of truth, it was impossible to recollect that a person so gifted was not handsome.

The ambition of Clarence Butteral, from his birth, had been to figure away as a person of some consequence in life, by which he hoped, in after times, to obtain the celebrity for which he panted. The first of these desires he had, by hook or by crook, as our friend Mrs. Singleton would have said, contrived to gratify; but the second he had scarcely dared to encourage, till the fortunate arrival of the Evanses in the neighbourhood, when it revived in all its genuine force; and hope pointed to a prospect, not far distant, whence he might realize his most sanguine expectations. Another latent desire also lurked in the bosom of the aspiring Clarence; he wished to see the Continent; for Theodore's description of the beautiful Olivia had fired his soul; he wished to see her—wished to judge for himself, whether the account given of her by

by his friend was not an exaggeration of her charms—wished—in short, he knew not what he wished, except most ardently to accompany Theodore Evans on his return to the *Italian shores*.

CHAPTER X.

THE blandishments of Clarence Butteral produced an effect equally favourable to his interested views on both father and son; for while Theodore felt himself happy in the society of this young man, Mr. Evans never questioned the intentions of one so apparently unkackneyed in the ways of the world, nor for once suspected that any sentiment, inconsistent with the laws of honour and truth, could spring from him.

In this opinion the artful Clarence saw his advantage, and determined to act up

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to the characterr he had assumed; and although there was scarcely a vice, young as he was, into which he could not have initiated his young friend, he forbore the gratification of so doing, deeming it more politic to conceal the cloven foot under the borrowed garb of prudence, till a fitter opportunity might induce him to advance it.

In the strictest union of sentiment and friendship with this designing impostor, on the part of Theodore, passed the time allotted for their residence in England; and as the season drew nigh which was destined to convey them thence, Theodore, as the Butterals had hoped and expected, was found to pine at the ensuing separation from his friend. His fine flow of spirits vanished, his excellent appetite fled, and his naturally-strong constitution seemed as if undermining by some severe and secret calamity.

Alarmed by his altered appearance, the fond

fond father, by attentively observing the conduct of the friends, when present, and happy in the society of each other, and the melancholy contrast that marked when divided, easily obtained a clue to the sorrow that was thus ravaging the bosom of his son; and thinking that a trip to the Continent might be of advantage to a young man who had his way to make in the world, like Clarence Butteral, he immediately determined upon making arrangements for the youth to accompany them on their return to Italy.

It remains with the reader to conceive the happiness of this Machiavel on receiving this so long-wished-for invitation; and warm must his imagination be, to portray, even in idea, the proud self-possession he experienced at having so well succeeded in the intricate game he had so long been playing.—"The first step in the ladder to preferment," he exclaimed, with ecstasy, "now offers itself to

to my ambitious foot; and leave me alone, as occasion offers, to mount up to the last."

Behold the Evanses, with Clarence Butteral in their train, now turning their backs upon England, and looking forward with impatience to a reunion with their friends in Rome. The father, with passions tempered by time, longed to fold his Laurentina and her darling daughter to his bosom. The son, with enthusiastic love revelling, from a two years' absence, more wildly in his veins, thought of nothing but embracing his divine Olivia; whilst his friend saw nothing in his day-dreams more important than the idea of turning every incident to account, whilst he envied the ill-concealed transports of the unsuspecting Theodore.

The epoch in which the friends arrived at Rome was that when the turbulent influence of the French revolution began to spread itself in the kingdom. This was a period which a genius and disposition like that of the designing Clarence knew how

to turn to advantage, and a very short time elapsed before his intriguing spirit had made itself manifest, in various covert ways to aid and assist the overwhelming designs of the usurper; whilst his friends and patrons, totally incapable of suspecting his nefarious practices, admitted him to their bosom councils, and treated him in every respect as one of the family.

Having now obtained a tolerably-sure footing in the theatre of action, he had time to repose, and reconnoitre the ground before him. The two master-passions, to which he had ever bowed with adoration, were combined with many minor ones by which he was actuated, and amongst the latter, the love for women stood foremost. Still Butteral was not so blinded by vanity as to be insensible to the few attractions he possessed for female preference, and therefore never aimed at creating an interest in any female bosom, while to obtain them upon his own terms was all he stipulated for. The soft, voluptuous daughters of

of Italy he had beheld, from his first arrival amongst them, with admiration and delight; Julia Evans he thought beautiful, but Olivia Valvino—that Olivia whom he had been taught to think divine, far exceeded his transcendent expectations; and to decoy her to his arms was the purpose that now lay uppermost in his mischief-making brain.

Many months had not elapsed after Theodore's restoration to the society of his beloved Olivia, ere the aspect of the times gave notice of disturbing their tranquillity. Already had the approaching armies of the invader of almost all Europe created consternation in the peaceful inhabitants of Rome—already had danger begun to stalk abroad, and already had heavy contributions been levied on its wealthy citizens, when the Evanses, doubtful alike of their personal safety as well as the security of their property, began to debate within themselves on the propriety of their again returning to England. In order to facili-

tate this project, they formed the resolution of disposing of some of their Italian possessions, and began to lay plans as to the most expeditious modes of travelling, when they found their designs frustrated, and their plans abortive, by having a body of armed men immediately lodged in the house. This was a circumstance hitherto unprecedented; and why they should be singled out to be thus burthened, was to them inexplicable. From this period all seemed to go wrong with this devoted family; spies were set upon their actions, their property diminished, and they became next prisoners in their own dwellings. Added to this, the indignities to which the females of the party were exposed, from the taunting insults and coarse ribaldry of the soldiers, was insufferable; and hard indeed must that heart be which could unmoved behold their deplorable condition. Such a heart, however, did exist in the bosom of Clarence Butteral. This *monster*, for a bribe, had betrayed the confidence

confidence of the friend whose bread he was eating—had carried devastation into his family; nor was he content to stay his villainous hand so long as any thing in the shape of gain was to be obtained, or any sensual gratification to be expected on the score of the innocent Julia.

Wounded in the tenderest part by beholding his adored wife and darling daughter thus hourly exposed to indignities which it ill became them to receive, but from which there was no redress save that of flight, which every hour convinced them became less and less practicable, Mr. Evans, at length proposed, in order to secure their safety, that a separation should take place between them; and that, whilst he and Theodore remained at home to watch and counteract, as far as possible, the licentious proceedings of their unwelcome guests, the ladies should become inmates of Villa Valvino; here, with their highly-esteemed Olivia, her worthy parents, and gallant brother to defend them, he trusted they

would be exempt from the outrages they were daily experiencing in their own mansion.

With this arrangement the exigency of the times led them to comply; and experiencing no opposition to their plan, the next day saw them, escorted by Clarence and Theodore, in safety with their friends, where the warmest reception promised that security they were now denied at home. But, alas! little did these innocent people conceive the net that was spreading for their destruction! In order to accomplish the separation of the lovely Julia from her natural protectors, and to establish her an inmate with the divine Olivia, was a Machiavelian project, for which the artful Clarence hugged himself, not doubting but a rich reward in the possession of both awaited him.

From this hour misfortune in every tangible shape appeared to beset the house of Valvino. In vain did the noble owner and his lofty-minded son exert themselves to

to stem the torrent that threatened to overwhelm them; it came rushing in all its fury; and bursting over their devoted heads, bore down all before it.

Theodore Evans had supported his own calamities, and those of his unfortunate family, with a degree of heroism that did him honour; but to behold his worshipped Olivia thus precipitated from her exalted station in life, without a home to call her own, unmanned him, and he wept his inability to serve her on the bosom of the treacherous Clarence, whilst he would consult him as to the steps necessary to be taken in order to save them *all;* for he could not be convinced that the lives of either family were safe, when so apparently marked out for destruction.

This was the grand climax to which the crafty Butteral wished to bring Theodore. He had thus far succeeded in crushing two families to the earth, aided by his overbearing associates, with whom he had divided the spoils by which he became

rich; but there was still more to be done, which required a masterly hand, and for which the absence of the lover and brother of his destined victims was highly necessary; an escape therefore to England was immediately suggested.

"But how, my dear Clarence, can this be accomplished without money?" inquired Theodore.

That was a question Clarence very well knew; but eager to get rid of him at any rate, he advised Theodore to take a trip over first, in order to raise the necessary sums, offering in the meantime to stand in his stead as guardian to his afflicted family; when, at his return, he would resign the office of protector, and assist in conducting them from this land of terror and desolation.

Such was the advice of the apparently-interested Clarence Butteral, *interested* only in the *safety* and *welfare* of his friends, which perfectly corresponded with the ideas of the half-distracted Theodore, as being the only means of liberating those most

most dear to him; and relying on the word of his friend to do all that he had promised during his absence, he hastened to consult his father as to the propriety of the step about to be taken. Upon his ascent towards the scantily-furnished apartment, now alone remaining for the use of his venerated parent, he heard, amidst the bustling tones of several voices, the mingled cries of distress, and quickly entering, what was his consternation at beholding that beloved father, of whom he had come in search, in order to demand his advice in regard to the scheme in question, lying in the agonies of death; and scarcely had he time to recognize and bless his son, ere that spirit which had animated the body of the best of fathers and of friends had fled for ever.

Borne down by the tissue of misfortunes which had so unaccountably accumulated to crush him and his family, the soul of the high-spirited Evans had suddenly given way, leaving to his son, as

his representative, the care of those dearest to him in life; and to whom the double duty of aiding and assisting those beloved beings now devolving, made him the more strenuous in the arduous task which he had imposed upon himself to perform. Not a second was now to be lost. To leave his half-distracted mother and deeply-sorrowing sister at a period like the present, seemed the quintessence of cruelty; but it was a case that admitted of no palliation, though he might have been somewhat consoled by the reflection, could he have thought at all, that he should leave these beloved relatives in the sacred hands of friendship, whilst he winged his way to distant climes, as the means of procuring their future safety; and at this period was it, after an expeditious voyage to England, that *Theodore Evans* made his singular visit to sir Owen Singleton, as recorded in our first volume.

The result of this visit has been already explained; we have therefore, instead of placing

placing him on the rack of suspense, and describing all the tortures he suffered from impatience, which frequently led him to curse the tardiness of the vessel that bore him, only to conduct the ardent Theodore, after having so well succeeded in his mission, with all the rapidity possible, back again. But although no extraordinary delays had occurred to retard his progress, still his absence had been of sufficient duration to have engendered a thousand mischiefs inimical to his repose. Upon his quitting Rome, the count Valvino and his gallant son, the youthful Lorenzo, had been dragged from their home in the dead of night, and conveyed no one knew whither; but not before the most solemn compact had been sealed between him and the lovely Julia Evans, between whom an affection had long subsisted, although it was no season for wooing, whilst sorrowing over a father's bier, a brother's absence, and a mother's tears;

and the youthful bridegroom might have exclaimed with the exulting Richard—

"Was ever woman in such humour wooed?
Was ever woman in such humour won?"

But the exigency of the times required sacrifices great and uncommon; and by assuming the imposing title of husband, Lorenzo believed himself best able to afford the assistance he wished to this persecuted family.

The union of these young people strengthened the interest and affection of the individuals thus thrown upon each other for support, while it frustrated for a time the insidious designs of their arch-enemy; but the burning rage into which he was thrown by this unexpected coalition was not to be extinguished; its ardour might indeed be damped for a season by the late occurrence; but like water scattered over burning coals, it only served to make the flame of vengeance burn more vividly than ever.—"Husband!" muttered

muttered he to himself—"Pshaw! *Husbands* are as easily removed as other men, when necessity or inclination requires it; and you shall not long be burthened with yours, my lovely Julia, I promise you!" The young Lorenzo, with his father, disappeared accordingly.

Horror-struck at so appalling a transaction, the distracted females had now no one to rely upon, but the perfidious Clarence, whom they believed as much their friend as ever; to him, therefore, they unburthened their griefs—to him they looked for that protection which he was not slow in promising, and to him they looked for redress in the restoration of the two gentlemen who had so strangely disappeared.

Here the wily Butteral saw his advantage; in this point the divine Olivia would be vulnerable; to save a father's and a brother's life, what sacrifices might she not be brought to make! from this moment he dated the success of his villainy.

The devoted Olivia, as ranking first in his

his estimation, now became the object of his silent attentions; but finding they passed unregarded, he was prompted by impatience to a more unequivocal proceeding, and boldly declared his passion in terms not to be mistaken, and as quickly received a mild but positive refusal from the object of his pursuit. Clarence knew enough of the sex to understand that however scarce they may be, there are some females that will not "unsought be won;" and therefore nothing daunted, he returned with unabated vigour to the siege, till a threatened application, on her part, to the countess her mother, induced him in some measure to throw off the mask by offering terms of capitulation—nothing less than the guaranteeing the safety, nay, even the lives of those most dear to her.

To save lives so precious, Olivia Valvino would have done much; but to have sacrificed herself to one so odious in his person, even if her heart had not been inviolably attached

attached to another, was not to be thought of; for she was convinced, had her gallant father and beloved brother been present to have heard this insolent proposal from one so little authorized to make it, they would have commanded her to refuse her acquiescence. Was this a man, she questioned within herself, on whom she could place any reliance? was not he a very wretch, who could thus endeavour to wound his absent friend in the tenderest point, by wishing to supplant him in the affections of the woman he loved? and if he was capable of committing an action so vile in its consequences as this, why not others?—"Ah, my unhappy friends!" she wildly exclaimed, as conviction seemed to break in upon her mind, "too surely have you been the prey of this deceitful man; and who knows how soon your poor Olivia may be destined to follow you!"

From this painful soliloquy she had but just recovered sufficient composure not to alarm

alarm her beloved and suffering mother, when the object of her meditation stood before her. From the haughty and averted looks of Olivia, the penetrating Clarence saw he had nothing to hope on the score of her compliance; it was therefore necessary to the completion of his project that he should proceed to extremities; and the doom of Olivia, the beautiful and accomplished Olivia Valvino, was from this dark period unalterably fixed.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

In order to trepan the artless object of his worthless passion the more securely into his clutches, the designing Butteral, who had still a deeper game to play, found it necessary to proceed with all the caution, as well as rapidity, which the shortness of Theodore's absence allowed. Affecting therefore still to wait Olivia's answer, he neither alarmed her by any further prosecution of his unwelcome suit, nor appeared to understand or remark the unusual coldness of her manner, but devoted his time and attention, as formerly, to the unfortunate family.

About this period the sorrowing Julia was destined to receive an additional shock to those by which she had already been nearly overwhelmed; from day to day she

she experienced the unutterable grief of seeing her only surviving parent sinking rapidly into the tomb, which already appeared yawning to receive her. The constitution of the gentle and beautiful Laurentina was not sufficiently robust to bear up against the storms that had so rudely assailed her; the foundation had been sapped to the bottom—it tottered, crumbled, and at length fell, never to rise again in this world of vice and misery.

In consequence of this melancholy event, however the suspicions of the wretched Olivia might appear to be lulled, through compassion for the afflicted Julia, they were not laid asleep; and deeply did she watch the turn of the heavy lurking eye of Clarence, as he sat, in her imagination, meditating mischief. To have trusted herself a moment alone with him, worlds could not have bribed her; and yet to have made known all her horrid surmises in regard to him, would be to bereave themselves of the only protector they had the

the semblance of; she therefore determined, as the safest way, never to be in company with him but in the presence of her friend or mother; and to guard her suspicions in the strictest manner, till the return of her own beloved Theodore might enable her to repeat them.

Olivia succeeded, as she thought, in keeping her resolution for some days unsuspected by any one; but the veil which she had cast over her conduct was quickly penetrated by the watchful Clarence, while he played with her, as the artful angler tickles the trout destined to swallow his bait.

For several days then all went smoothly on, till it was understood that a solemn mass was going to be performed in the Church of St. Peter, on the eve of a patron saint, when to implore his favour and protection for their persecuted country, as well as compassion for their domestic calamities, was an opportunity not to be neglected by any *buona Cattolico*; and

and Olivia, in consequence, fearing no interruption from her persecutor during so solemn a festival, when the tears of suffering thousands would bedew the feet of their altars, hesitated not to accompany her mother and the drooping Julia, attended by Clarence Butteral, in this necessary act of devotion.

The splendid dome of this stupendously-magnificent cathedral already blazed brightly with its innumerable lamps, ere our party entered its walls. Hundreds had already made their way towards the gilded shrine at which they wished to kneel, and many more were pressing on them from behind, when their arms, which had securely been entwined within each other's, were suddenly disunited by the crowd, and in another moment Olivia found herself with no other protector than the man which she had the greatest cause to dread. For a moment she beheld her situation with horror, and gazing wildly around, as far as her eye could penetrate, she eagerly,

though

though in an under-tone, demanded her mother.

"She is but separated from us by the crowd; we shall soon be able to rejoin her," whispered Clarence; when scarcely attending to his reply, Olivia became wild with apprehensions; but as the sanctity of the place forbade her giving vent to the suspicions which assailed her, she could only, with excessive tremor, beseech her companion to go in search of her friends, alleging a thousand times, and that with truth, that she had much rather he would give his attention to them than remain with her.

Apparently won by her importunity, Butteral at length agreed to comply with her request, though at the imminent hazard of leaving her unprotected, when turning his head, he caught sight of a gentleman with whom he acknowledged an acquaintance, and beckoning him from his party, he begged leave to consign Olivia to his care for a few moments.

Any

Any one, in her opinion, was preferable to him; and eagerly accepting the proffered arm of the stranger, she insisted upon Butteral's instantly going in search of her mother.

Scarcely had a minute elapsed after this separation, when the pealing anthem resounded through the grand choir, in order to give notice of the elevation of the host, when all sunk upon their knees, and Olivia, wrapping her face in her veil, was too intent upon her devotions to recollect her perilous situation; all vanished from her mental view, save the recollection that she was now in the house of her God, and to him she owed the purest sentiments of her heart, which she now offered up in the humblest adoration and praise. The tumult of her mind somewhat calmed by the fervour of her devotion, Olivia arose from her recumbent posture, and looked around with confidence, in the hope of seeing her friends. In this hope she was not disappointed; her mother, with Julia,

escorted

escorted by Butteral, stood over against her; and though the pressure was still too great to admit of their approaching each other, a show of recognition took place on both sides, which satisfied her of their safety.

The service concluded, the crowd began to disperse, and in their retreat hurried Olivia, along with her conductor, towards the grand entrance. Fearing to lose sight of her mother, she constantly kept turning her head, to ascertain if she was near, and as constantly saw her moving forward in the same direction with herself, but invariably remaining at an equal distance, though frequently assured by her guide that she could not fail to overtake them.

In this way was she borne forward, till on entering the streets, which, when contrasted with the blaze of light she had quitted, appeared to be in total darkness, she was unable to distinguish one object from another; and the poor Olivia, left in the

the hands of this stranger, was by him hurried into a street leading in a contrary direction to the one she ought to have entered, at the extremity of which stood a carriage in waiting to convey her from her home and her friends for ever.

Great was the alarm, both of Julia and the countess Valvino, upon finding that Olivia had not reached home so soon as themselves; but when the pealing bell from the dome of St. Peter's struck the hour of midnight, and they saw her not, Reason, in either, scarcely kept possession of her throne. It was in vain that the half-distracted mother, dreading every evil that might befall her luckless child in times like the present, called upon her to return. In vain the half-fainting Julia required her lost friend and sister at the hands of Butteral; while he pretended to soothe their alarm by assurances of her safety, and his friend's integrity.

In this way passed the sleepless night. The ensuing day, and many following, brought

brought them no relief; till worn out with watching, grief, and apprehension of what they might still have to encounter, these suffering females gave way to despair, and sunk beneath the merciless attacks that had been so cruelly levelled at their peace.

A raging fever, accompanied by delirium, now raged in the veins of the countess, while a low nervous attack appeared to consume the very vitals of the half-frenzied Julia.

Clarence, the detestable Clarence, began to fear he had overshot the mark, and instead of fairly securing both his victims, he should be in danger of losing one of them. Olivia he believed to be his, beyond the power of fate to oppose; and Julia he intended to make so, should not death intervene to prevent it.—"But why wait," he exclaimed to himself, "in order to give the grim king of terrors an opportunity to rob me of my prey? Why not pluck the fruit ere time allows it to

decoy? It shall be so, and ere to-morrow's dawn, my fair one, the happy Clarence, his ardent wishes gratified, shall have nothing to dread on the score of opposition from thee!"

Nothing now remained for this double-refined villain but to arrange his plans, in order to force or decoy the innocent Julia into his snares, and as twilight slowly approached, to put them in execution. Coadjutors were never wanted at a time like this, when oppression, rapine, and murder, stalked barefacedly abroad to assist him in his nefarious practices. Securing then the assistance of two or three of his colleagues, in case he should meet with more resistance than he expected to his plan, they repaired to the almost-deserted dwelling of the unfortunate invalid, and entered without let or molestation. Clarence, after requesting his accomplices to remain behind till called for by a private signal from him, entered the private apartment, where, reposing on two miserable pallets,

pallets, lay the sufferers, scarcely able to raise the languid eye, as a mark of welcome to the wretch who came to murder their repose. Not deigning to notice the apparently-dying countess, he hastily drew near the sinking Julia, and pressing the nerveless hand in his, he began, in a hurried manner, to talk of her recovery—of immediate change of air — difference of scene—renovated health — pleasures in store, with a long *et-cetera* of wild and incoherent dialect, from which the affrighted creature could only gather that he wished to conduct her hence; nay, she was not quite sure but that she had heard the beloved name of *Olivia* mingled in this mass of incongruities, in order to induce her to comply with some request which Butteral, with so much seeming energy, was enforcing; when raising herself, she wildly articulated—"Olivia! did you say *Olivia?* Oh, for mercy's sake, speak, and ease my distracted brain, if you know aught of Olivia?"

"What should I know of her?" questioned he, in a hurried accent. "All I know is, that she is lost to us; and that you may not share the same fate, I come to conduct you to a place of greater safety, where it will be my Julia's own fault if she does not again bloom the fairest of the fair."

"Leave me!" cried the affrighted Julia, waving her hand, as she, for the first time, discovered the wily libertine in her brother's friend—in that friend in whom she had been taught to confide during scenes of horror and alarm, but in whom the fiend-like propensities by which he was actuated were now become visible. "Leave me, Clarence Butteral, and Heaven grant I may never more behold so perfidious a countenance!"

"On the contrary," exultingly exclaimed this monster of iniquity, "Heaven grant we may not so hastily be separated! for this night I take you to my arms, and it is no trifle that shall release you from them.

them. So come, madam," added he, clasping her fragile form as he spoke, " this is but waste of time, and we have some way to travel."

Thus saying, he was proceeding to force her from the apartment, when, almost frenzied at the idea of what might befall her, she acquired sufficient exertion, from terror, to utter loud and piercing shrieks, calling at the same time on her husband, Olivia, and her dear absent *brother*, to protect her.

The sound of several voices at this instant gave indication of some bustle below; when Clarence, fearing a dispute among his friends, gave the appointed signal, in order to obviate it, when scarcely had his shrill whistle rang through the forlorn apartments of this desolated mansion, than he beheld a stranger forcing his way through the myrmidons whom he had left to guard the passes below, and from whose pistol, at the reiterated shrieks of the despairing Julia, he received a couple

of bullets, which put an end at once to his daring enterprise.

With the fall of the detestable Butteral, who had received a memento of this night's transaction that would carry him to the grave, fell the fainting Julia; but no sooner was she freed from the relaxed gripe of the ruffian who had held her, than she was closely encircled in the arms of a stranger, who, attentive only to her restoration, suffered the adherents of Butteral to bear off the bleeding body of their fainting accomplice unmolested. This they effected with all expedition; for, being unarmed, as they expected not to war with women, they were conscious they stood but little chance with one so bold and resolute as the intruder appeared to be, should they hazard an encounter.

For a length of time the form of the insensible Julia continued to repose on the bosom of her liberator. The flitting spirit seemed to have taken leave of its frail tenement for ever, and the horror of losing

losing her began to shake his manly frame, when the forerunner of animation —the gentle sigh, was seen struggling in her bosom, and renewed his hopes. With the tenderest care did he continue to watch the returning symptoms of reanimation; and oh, with what sympathizing sorrow did he behold the ravages which grief and sickness had created in a form so lately radiant with youth, health, and beauty! "Alas, fair flower!" sighed he, as he fondly bent over her, "how is thy drooping head bowed down by the storms of adversity, and thy sweetness already crushed to the earth by the hand of villainy! Monsters!" he continued to exclaim, as his eye glanced into a mental futurity, "monsters in human shape! will not Heaven be avenged upon thee for crimes like these? Too surely it will—a day of retribution is at hand, when the blood of thousands shall call down vengeance on your devoted heads."

In this agonizing soliloquy he continued

ed to vent the feelings which agitated his frame even to feebleness; and having deposited his burthen on the pallet, from whence she had been so rudely torn by the insulting Butteral, he continued to watch returning life, till her eyes opened, and opening saw, and seeing, recognized a dearly-beloved and long-absented brother.

CHAPTER XII.

THEODORE Evans had travelled on the wings of impatience again to reach Rome, in order to comfort and sustain those dearest to him in existence; and outstripping the speed of his attendant, in his haste to gain the mansion, which he wished, yet dreaded to enter, had arrived just in time to save his beloved sister from the base attacks of what he thought a lawless ruffian,

ruffian, whom he rejoiced to have punished for his temerity. Ah, little did the generous unsuspecting Theodore think what a serpent he had been nourishing in his bosom, or little did he conjecture to what an extent the wounds this serpent had inflicted!

"Ah, my dearest Theodore!" sighed the terrified Julia, as, with returning reason, the late occurrence flashed across her memory, "let us fly, I conjure you—instantly fly, or the wretch may return to satisfy his worst of purposes, when even you may not be able to escape his horrid machinations!"

Theodore, who had arrived in time to witness the daring attack, either upon his sister's honour or her life, saw indeed that their present situation offered no place of safety or defence for them; should the ruffians return, what was his single arm opposed to numbers? Instantly therefore he prepared to comply with Julia's request; and carefully wrapping her up,

was preparing to descend the stairs he had so quickly vaulted up, when he was stopped by her recollecting her suffering companion, whom she requested he would convey in preference to herself, while Heaven, she trusted, would give her strength to follow them.

Until this moment the bewildered Theodore had remained unconscious of any other person save themselves being present, and following the motion of her eye, he approached the little pallet, and there beheld the countess di Valvino a corpse.

Horror-struck at such a soul-harrowing sight, and the dismal events which followed so thick upon each other, he could scarcely stifle the groan labouring in his breast, or the curiosity he felt to inquire how all this had happened; but recollecting the effect such a procedure might have on the weak nerves of the still-agitated Julia, he merely affirmed that her companion slept, and that after having conveyed her to a place of security, the invalid

invalid should be his next care, when, in order to prevent any further argument upon the subject, he raised his unfortunate sister in his fraternal arms, and quitting the mansion by a private portal, well known to himself, he quickly bore her to a place of safety.

With returning sense succeeded returning horror, as the wretched Julia, now shuddering at the recollection of past events, prepared to relate them to her brother, who stood aghast at the recollection of the scene he had so opportunely arrived to witness; but what was even this, compared to the heart-rending account he was about to receive, of all that had occurred during his absence—an account that could not fail to rack every fibre of his manly breast, and thrill every nerve with inborn agony; for had he not to learn, amongst lesser evils, the irreparable loss of his adored *Olivia?*

For several days the still-suffering invalid was incapable of entering minutely

into every particular which had so lately occurred in the two unfortunate families, thus apparently marked out as victims of destruction by some overbearing power, during which time Theodore had broken the afflicting intelligence of the death of the countess in the best manner he was able, and had also seen her remains secretly and decently committed to the tomb. Nought therefore remained for him, but to watch over the only relic he had now remaining of those he had left behind, and to make the most earnest researches after his lost friends, whose discovery, if they were still inhabitants upon earth, he pledged himself to effect; when, as a preliminary step, he intended to learn the retreat of the traitorous Butteral, whom he had no doubt but he had severely wounded, and who, from Julia's account, he had every reason to suspect, in spite of appearances on the night of the solemn festival, had been privy to the disappearance of Olivia.

Wounded

Wounded in the tenderest point by this deceptive villain, the now-half-distracted Evans burned to have him face to face, to upbraid him with his duplicity, and to force the secret of her retreat from his hypocritical heart. But in this he was prevented, by the melancholy state in which his invalid still continued. To have been so suddenly deprived of her parents, her friends, and a beloved husband to boot, were circumstances sufficiently poignant to shock the most vigorous constitution. But Julia Valvino had yet another shock to contend with; she was fated to become a mother, and till that critical period was over, she demanded all the cares and attentions which a doting brother could bestow. In due time the expected infant saw the light; it came into the world healthy, vigorous, and strong, but fated never to experience a mother's care, a mother's tenderness—the fragile form of the declining Julia, unable to contend with the storms that menaced her,

her, gave way; and in seeking her kindred skies, she consigned her infant, as a melancholy memento, to her sorrowing brother.

From this time the mind of Theodore Evans became so warped by his new cares and past afflictions, that at times he could even forget there still existed such a man as Clarence Butteral, one whom he had reason to rank as his deadliest foe; and above all, *one* to whom alone he could look for intelligence concerning his worshipped Olivia. But from this torpor of mind he was one day roused by a couple of the *Lazzaroni* hastily knocking at his door, and delivering a kind of package, directed in his name, immediately decamped, leaving him at his leisure to ascertain from whence it came, and to examine its contents. This he was not long in doing; for severing its lid, what was his amazement at perceiving a full-length portrait of a person hideous to behold, and with whose distorted visage he had not

not the slightest acquaintance? For several minutes he stood contemplating the horrid assemblage of features that met his eye, without being able to recall any one of them precisely to his memory, or to conjecture from whence came the painting, or for what purpose it had been conveyed to him, when, in removing it from the case, in order to take a more accurate survey, he observed underneath a scroll, folded in a careless manner, which, on opening, he found to contain the following address—

"*Theodore Evans*, once denominated my *friend*, but now regarded as my bitterest *enemy*, examine the inanimate canvas before you, and know, that in beholding that, you now contemplate the resemblance of what your murderous hand—murderous but for the interposition of fate, has made of *Clarence Butteral!* But know also, *wretch*, that although he has been thus maimed and disfigured by thee, he is not to be injured with impuni-

ty;

ty; and that the vengeance which is due to such an act shall still fall on your devoted head. Easy-gulled fool! I always—I always hated you for possessing those attractions I could never reach; but now enmity has received a tenfold increase, and, by all the powers on earth, I swear never to cease persecuting you, till I obtain a full, a lasting, and *a glorious revenge!*"

Horror-struck at receiving such a confirmation of the implacable resentment of one whom he had formerly nourished in his bosom as a friend, and regarded as a brother, the hand of Theodore trembled as he grasped the fatal paper, which opened his eyes as to the guilt of the unhappy creature whose resemblance he contemplated; and as he reflected upon the enormity of that guilt in regard to his Olivia, whom he could now no longer doubt but had fallen a victim to his arts, his head became giddy, and losing all remembrance but a sense of the anguish that oppressed him, the unfortunate victim of deception sunk

sunk in agony upon the floor, and only revived to experience a deeper sense of the miseries which might await him hereafter.

The already-harassed nerves of the luckless Theodore experienced a shock from this last unfeeling outrage that was not easy to recover; and for some time the only exertion he was capable of making was in behalf of the infant which had been so solemnly committed to his care by its dying mother. *That* he considered would be the next object of resentment to the vindictive Butteral; and in order to secure its safety, he could think of no plan so feasible as that of secretly conveying it to England, which was not a theatre in which this hypocritical villain would dare to exhibit his vices.

To England then, and to the protection of the steward at Myfod Vale, with the most solemn injunctions for its preservation and secrecy, was the infant conveyed; after which, having been assured of its

safe

safe arrival, and resting on the known fidelity of the person to whom he had confided so valuable a deposit, he had no farther care but for his own preservation, and the discovery of his treasured Olivia. This was an idea that never forsook him; to this point were his endeavours always directed, and from which, in spite of the many persecutions he was secretly made to undergo, he never swerved. But, alas! vain were the most strenuous efforts of an individual to combat the evil designs of many. Defeat followed him in every step; his most secret and apparently well-digested plans were sure to be frustrated, and himself, instead of arriving at the goal of his wishes, frequently trepanned amidst a horde of wretches, and obliged to bear whatever cruelties, short of taking his life, they chose to inflict; that, by unanimous consent, seemed to be spared for no other purpose but to afford triumph to his unfeeling tormentors.

Year after year rolled heavily on, uncheered

cheered by any event which could render life desirable, save the receiving a favourable account from England relative to his *protégée;* when his mind harassed, and his constitution giving way, (for, in spite of his most strenuous efforts, he had never been able to learn any thing respecting the lost idol of his soul, whom he now believed to be numbered with the dead), Theodore Evans again determined to seek his native land, to watch in person over the blossom he wished to see reared to maturity, and to stand in the place of parents she had so untimely lost. As secretly therefore as possible did he prepare again to quit a country which had been so fatal to his race, and where all his hopes of happiness were buried. Every thing had been as privately arranged as possible, disguises obtained for himself and an attendant, and posthorses engaged to convey them in the dead of night to the nearest port; when, just as they were preparing to mount, a shrill whistle, proceeding

ing

ing from the mouth of some one apparently close at their elbow, gave the alarm to half a dozen stragglers in the garb of Lazzaroni, who quickly closing around them, soon accomplished their project, that of securing and boldly bearing off the persecuted Theodore.

A *prison*, under the pretence of his holding a correspondence with the chief of an adverse faction, was destined to receive him; and here, without the means to prove the falsity of the accusation, he was destined, in all probability, to linger out a devoted existence, without the means of procuring comfort, or other society, save the horrible painting of the mutilated Butteral, which, by dint of perseverance, he had contrived to get admitted into his cell. This, though a basilisk to his eyes, strange to say, was the only thing which he cared to contemplate. In this was contained

"Food for meditation e'en to madness!"

Here

Here he could recognize the false friend, the mistress lost, relatives betrayed, himself an outcast, perhaps still more—a sacrifice to be offered up to the resentment of that fiend-like form! Beside, was it not a memorial of sufficient magnitude to warn him, should he ever again be at liberty, no more to hold converse with man, by whom he had thus been betrayed? —"No!" he would exclaim, while frenzy reanimated his sunken eye, and gave power to utterance, "all is dead to me, all become uninteresting; and this once-tempting world and I are quits for ever!"

Several succeeding years of an unfortunate life were spent by the melancholy Evans in the grated walls of a dungeon, without indeed his having seen the face of his persecutor, but who he too well knew to be the original of the picture before him, under whose horrid oppression he might, after having lingered out a life of misery, at last have fallen a victim, had not a counter-revolution taken place in the

the kingdom. This, by dethroning the usurper Murat, threw open his prison-doors; from whence escaping as quick as possible, Fortune for once befriended him, and he regained in safety the beloved shores of old England; though not to rest there in peace, for *peace* and Theodore Evans had parted for ever.

Arrived in safety, his first care was to seek out the steward to whom he had confided the orphan child of his ever-beloved sister; and his heart beat high as he travelled, "with weary step and slow," towards his native Monmouthshire, in the hope of finding it all he wished—all that a fond mother could have fancied. But here again was he fated to shake hands with Disappointment, who came to blight his dearest hopes—his ardent expectations.

Taking up his abode at an obscure cottage, within a short distance of Myfod Vale, the eager Evans was able to prosecute the inquiries necessary to his repose in secrecy, when he soon received the heart-

heart-rending intelligence that the steward, to whom he had confided the child, had been for some years dead, without having left a clue to guide him towards its recovery. He also learned that sir Hugh Singleton was the proprietor of his estate, to whom, by right of contract, it had for some years belonged; but that no young person resided with him except his nephew, who was the undoubted son of his only brother. This then could not be the infant in whom he had been so long interested; and believing it to be no longer an inhabitant of this world, his nerves received an additional shock, which subjected him again to that state of moody melancholy which had so long preyed upon him during his residence in Italy, and which might lead a rational being to doubt the sanity of a mind where once the graces loved to dwell, and where reason and truth had formerly erected their habitation.

Restless and unhappy, the ill-fated Theodore frequently passed the hours devoted to

to sleep in wild and moody rambles amidst unfrequented places, but most commonly he was attached to the ruins of the mutilated castle; the broken and tottering walls of which corresponded with the ruin of his own prospects, and in its falling state it but too aptly kept pace with his fallen fortune. To this spot then he loved to extend his midnight rambles; here he could ruminate on scenes gone by without any hopes for the future; there all was dark and dreary, without a single ray to gild the prospect; and here, at length, fixing in some measure his abode, did Frederick Singleton, with his friend Meillard, first discover him in the person of the solitary *Recluse*.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIII.

THE sedate inhabitants of Myfod Vale were now looking on the tiptoe of expectarion for the arrival of Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, whom lady Ap-Howel used jocularly to remark would prevent Meillard from dying of the spleen, by giving him an opportunity of studying her character when he had nothing to do, or preventing him from fagging himself to death when he had, by timely interrupting him with some of her vagaries. Notwithstanding she would add—"Jeannette is a rough diamond, who only wants the touch of a skilful lapidary to display its lustre." And so in time thought the grave tutor of Frederick, as he frequently watched unheeded the wild effusions, and sometimes wanton

tricks, which sprung from an unvitiated heart.

This lady, although some few years had passed over her head, as well as ours, since the rencontre at the rocky cabin in the ravine, was neither become more grave nor sentimental than she was at that period; and could we have dived to the bottom of her heart, we might perhaps have still found the seeds of superstition as thickly sown as ever. Be that as it may, whatever she wanted in refinement she made up in goodness of disposition, and that *gaieté de cœur* which is ever invincible in the fortunate possessor.

From the time of this lady's residence at the Vale, all seemed, if not actual gaiety, at least bustle and confusion. Exercise abroad succeeded amusement within; and to walk, to sing, to ride, and dance, constituted her delight, whilst she scarcely felt pity, or could make any allowance for nerves less robust than her own. To keep pace with this animated girl was beyond the

the power, however great the stretch of complaisance might be on the side of Love; when at such times, Miss Jeannette, by flying off to the villa, would find an able auxiliary in the person of Mrs. Singleton, who would declare that she was a girl after her own heart upon such occasions, that she loved to be free and easy, and that to gallop with her a twenty-mile stretch after breakfast was one of her greatest enjoyments.

One morning, when Miss Griffiths was gone upon an expedition of this kind, it happened that her attendant, who made up, by an affectation of gentility, what her mistress lost in the reality, reported that she had been accosted in the park by an odd sort of a man, who desired to know, she said, in what capacity she lived at Myfod Vale, and he had also put a great many other impertinent questions to her, by which she had been flustrated very much, and scarcely knew how she had got home.

"Impertinent questions, Taffline," repeated sir Hugh, as he accidentally overheard the wonderful tale she was relating; "of what nature, pray, might these questions be by which you seem so much discomposed?"

"Oh, sir!" she replied, "*I* thought them very impertinent indeed, I assure you; for they all related to you and to Mr. Frederick and the laties."

"The ladies!" questioned sir Hugh; "and pray what might he require as to the ladies, Taffline?"

"Why, sir, he asked if we had any laties in the family as well as gentlemen?—'To pe sure we have,' says I; 'sir Hugh Singleton does not life without laties, I assure you! There is laty Ap-Howel, and my own laty, Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, her niece, as helegant a young laty as ever climbed a mountain, or leapet over a craig, and I hope you will allow they are laties,' says I.—'And is that all?' said he, interrupting me; 'haven't you any other lady in

in the family?'—'To pe sure we have,' I replied; 'there is Miss Love.'—'Miss Love!' he repeated, 'and is that her only name?'—'As far as I know, and a very pretty name it is; I am certain I shouldn't wish for a petter, and——"

"And what followed?" demanded sir Hugh, rather impatiently, as Taffline seemed more inclined to proceed with her own comments than to gratify his curiosity.

"Oh, nothing more, sir Hugh," she replied; "and I am sure you will allow that it was, as I said, very impertinent, to ask servants so many questions apout their shuperiors."

"And what kind of an appearance did this inquisitive person carry with him, my good girl?" demanded sir Hugh.

"He had a very singular appearance, sir, indeed, and a very hodd hexpression with his eyes; and by his sanctified look and shabby dress, I should think he was something of a Westlean, seeing as he

talked a vast deal after all his questions apout faith being ground; and dipping the heart, and people being elected of God, when I am sure I never heard of any election; and a great teal more that I did not understand, but which frightened me so, and gave me the trimbles, that I shook all over like an absent leaf, and that's a true fact!"

"And what became of your new acquaintance afterwards, Taffline?" inquired sir Hugh.

"Oh, sir, I left him in the park, and cot home as fast as I could, for fear the coot man should not be in his right mind; for to my thinking he looked very like an infected person, he appeared so consequencical."

After assuring the still *flustrated* Taffline that she had nothing to fear from the appearance of the person she had described, sir Hugh retired to his library, leaving the wonder-stricken domestics to gather round their companion, whilst they listened,

ed, with gaping mouths, to the "twice-told tale;" when some seemed to regard the adventure in a serious and fearful light, literally believing she had encountered a maniac; whilst others appeared inclined to crack their jokes upon poor Taffline, by telling her it was some lover in disguise, who wished to make an impression on her heart. To this supposition the offended girl indignantly refused her conviction; and turning up her nose, assured them, as she walked off with a stately air, that he must change both *figure*, *feature*, and *tongue*, before he could make an *expression* on her heart!

Sir Hugh Singleton, although he had made light of Taffline's communication respecting her adventure in the park, could not divest himself of the desire to know why such a person as the one she had been describing, should be so curious or interested concerning him or his family. From the singular account she had given, the man in question certainly, in some

points, answered the description of Crampt-text. Could he indeed be returned, after having passed through his stipulated term of banishment? he questioned; and if so, what impudence must he be guilty of, thus to force himself into his very presence, as it were! However, it was immaterial, he further argued; the power of such an one to injure him further, he trusted, was at an end; and his motives for the inquiries he had made were merely the effects of curiosity; dismissing, therefore, the subject from his mind, the occurrence soon ceased to claim a place in his remembrance.

All again went smoothly on at Myfod Vale, and its inhabitants were equally happy in the enjoyment of each other's society, except Frederick and his adored *Love*, whose satisfaction was of a higher and more superlative cast than that which filled the bosoms of the rest; and whilst thus occupied with delightful and enchanting present, not a thought was suffered to stray towards a future, which might pre-

sent

sent a less cheering prospect. Thus the already-intoxicated youth continued to swallow large potions of the delicious beverage, by which he had already been overcome; whilst the gentle object of his affections manifested no dislike on her part to sip at the same fountain, whose waters were to both so palatable.

An unusual length of time had elapsed since the melancholy Theodore Evans had startled Love, by his voluntary exclamation on beholding her, in his last visit to the Vale; which circumstance had nearly escaped the memory of all its inhabitants, save her who was the most impressed by it; and in her bosom the mark became indelible. If she walked by herself, the hope of again encountering the stranger absorbed every other idea, and continued to lead her on. If she slept, he would frequently appear in the most engaging and interesting relations to her sleeping fancy, and dawn was scarcely welcome

when it came to banish such pleasing illusions.

With a mind thus fraught, she had stolen out one lovely morning, for the hundredth time, to ruminate on the appearance of this interesting stranger, who had once crossed her path, like the luminous flash that precedes the awful thunder, and is seen no more, when having rambled to a considerable distance from the house, she pursued a winding path that led to a solitary seat under the shelter of a spreading beech; here, screened from the rays of a noontide sun, she reclined at her ease, and gave way, as usual, to the deep meditation she was constantly engaged in, when the subject of her reflections was this mysterious *stranger*.

Not long had the pleasingly-painful subject continued to occupy her thoughts, when she was interrupted by a rustling which she heard amongst the branches behind her; and on turning her head, she beheld

beheld the figure of a man struggling to obtain a passage through them. The person in question, whom she judged, by his tattered habiliments and ordinary demeanour, to be some common beggar, immediately stood before her, and as instantly was the purse of the tender-hearted girl in her hand, in order to administer to his wants, ere he had time to proclaim them. But the action and intention were alike indifferent to the intruder, while he assured her it was not money he wanted. Surprised at such a declaration from one whose appearance announced him one of Charity's most pitiable objects, she raised her inquiring eyes to his face, and became horror-struck at the terrific appearance which met her view; for nothing more appalling to her imagination could she have beheld, than the worn-out, emaciated form of the ghastly being before her. For a few seconds the power of speech seemed denied the embarrassed girl, as her eyes fell under the sardonic

grin which had fixed his rigid features while he regarded her; but quickly regaining her self-possession, and feeling bold in conscious innocence, she mildly, but firmly, demanded his business with her?

"I ask neither your money nor your assistance, young lady," replied the wretched-looking creature; "but I have need of *you*—yes, of *you*—of whom, for many years of my life, I have been in search; and having found you, we meet to part no more. I have a debt," he continued, "which only *you* can cancel—a spark of revenge, still glowing in my breast, which only *you* can extinguish; so come along, I have a carriage awaiting your presence. Nay, no resistance!" he exclaimed, as she shrunk back with horror, from what she believed a madman—"no resistance," he repeated—"fate has at length made you mine, and by all the furies you shall not escape me!"

Although exceedingly terrified at his wild

wild threatenings, Love's presence of mind did not forsake her, and believing that if she could but once succeed in passing him, fear would sufficiently accelerate her speed to enable her to escape the threatened danger of falling into the hands of a madman; suddenly therefore she made a spring on one side, but though sufficiently agile to have effected her purpose, she was unfortunately prevented by a part of her dress becoming entangled with the seat from which she had just arisen; this, by arresting her flight, enabled the terrific object to lay hold of her, and, *sans cérémonie*, to proceed in dragging her away.

Finding all escape at an end, the affrightened Love now made the surrounding woods re-echo with her cries, as the wild wretch, in spite of her utmost efforts, continued to hurry her along; when, as she began to despair of succour from any human aid, a blow levelled at the back of the ruffian's head staggered him, and in

reeling,

reeling, he loosed his hold of his prey, by which means she flew from the vile entanglement of his arms, just as a repetition of the well-struck blow brought the monster to the ground.

Terror now gave wings to her flight, and it was not until she found herself within sight of the house, that she stopped to cast a look behind, when, observing that she was not pursued, she slackened her pace, and in safety, though not without feeling the effects of her late alarm, she gained lady Ap-Howel's dressing-room, who, alarmed by her almost-breathless agitation, and the paleness of her countenance, hastily demanded the cause, with which Love, as quickly as her tremor would allow, acquainted her.

Waiting for no comments on the scene, her ladyship instantly flew in search of sir Hugh. She, in as concise a manner as possible, acquainted him with the transaction, entreating that his servants might

be

be immediately sent out in search of the miscreant who had dared to commit so vile an outrage even in his own grounds.

The astonished baronet had no need to be thus admonished; instantly, therefore, collecting his servants, he issued at their head in search of the daring offender.

Scarcely had a quarter of an hour elapsed, when the ladies, who were upon the watch, discerned several persons advancing through the park, at the head of whom they soon discovered a strange gentleman, between Frederick and sir Hugh, whilst Meillard seemed to be superintending the safe conduct of a man who appeared to be detained against his will, whilst the servants were supporting some person who seemed incapable of moving without their assistance.

Eager to ascertain what all this meant, Love continued to regard the group, as they advanced, with the most scrutinizing interest, when she soon discovered, in the person

person of the invalid, the horrid-looking wretch who had so inhumanly alarmed her, and in the gentleman who accompanied her friends, the long-sought, long-wished-for stranger.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE last visit which the melancholy recluse alluded to in a former chapter made to the Vale, had created in his bosom sensations too painful to desire a repetition. There he had beheld an object which reminded him of one long since lost to him—of one whose remembrance must be ever dear, and whose untimely fate must be ever recollected with regret. To avoid therefore a recurrence of this internal agony, he had ventured there no more; but notwithstanding this effort in favour of his lacerated feelings, and the task imposed upon

upon himself of not again entering the house, yet, like Love, he could not refrain from frequently wandering within its tempting limits; and like her, actuated by the same motive, that of again beholding one by whom he felt himself so powerfully interested.

A similar disposition in the minds of both had led them forth on this memorable morning, and scarcely had this melancholy visionary reached the secluded spot, where he loved to loiter, impervious to every eye, than his ears were saluted by a piercing scream denoting female distress. Nerved by every generous feeling which prompts man to succour the softer sex, Theodore sprung forward, when beholding a female in the arms of a ruffian, he scarcely wanted the additional strength he experienced, on beholding the lovely form by which he had been so much affected, to fell the villain at his feet.

Scarcely had he effected the emancipation of this interesting object, ere he beheld

held Frederick Singleton darting towards him, led also to the spot by the shriek of terror which had reverberated amongst some rocks, whither he and Meillard were pursuing the game they had started in the valley, and who, on observing Love at liberty, and unconscious that from her had issued the agonizing scream, had offered his assistance to Evans, in raising the forlorn being before him, when, on beholding his face, it is perhaps more easy to imagine than describe the astonishment that took possession of both, as the one recognized in him the detested Clarence Butteral, the murderer of his sister, and the other, the mutilated figure of the horrid Ambrose!

"Villain!" exclaimed the trembling Evans, whilst he firmly grasped the arm of the half-senseless cripple, "hope never to escape me, till thou hast, by an ample confession of thine enormities, made atonement for the wrongs thou hast committed; though I fear," added he, sighing, "it will afford me but little satisfaction."

Ere

Ere an answer was obtained to this address, or rather apostrophe, from the agitated Theodore, they were startled by the report of a pistol, apparently at no great distance, and on turning round, were surprised at beholding Meillard struggling with a very suspicious-looking person, who seemed as if anxious to escape him. Finding, from the situation of his old acquaintance Ambrose, that he had been too much stunned by the blow which he had received from Mr. Evans to be able to escape, Frederick darted off to the assistance of his friend, whom he now found was the person who had fired, as a signal for help, being unable to cope with the stout athletic fellow before him.

The ardent Frederick now pounced upon him like the towering eagle on his prey, which he is sure to secure in his talons, and, like him, was bearing him off in security, when the appearance of sir Hugh and the servants relieved him from all further care, by receiving his prisoner into

into their own hands, with solemn injunctions for his safety.

"Oh, goot gracious!" exclaimed Taffline, who was upon the look-out, and was the first to observe the party from the hall-windows as they approached the house, "if that isn't the ott sort of poty that askt me so many impertinent questions in the park. I wonder if he pe really and truly crazed, or only make pelieve apout preaching and that sort of stuff. Well, he may ask questions now of sir Hugh himself, who perhaps mayn't be quite so civil, when he wants to know apout the laties," when the wonder-struck Taffline was obliged to effect her retreat, in order to give place to the parties who were about to be ushered in, where sir Hugh proceeded in form to take cognizance of the outrage that had been committed upon an individual of his own family.

Upon surveying the delinquents thus placed before him, the baronet was not a little

little surprised, in spite of his suspicions, to behold in the countenance of one of them an offender who had given him no little trouble some years before, in regard to his nephew, and who, after fulfilling the sentence of the law, seemed returned with the same inclination to practise on his patience, else why find him in such company, and evidently assisting the wretch whom they had been fortunate enough to secure in his nefarious designs upon the young lady in question?

While these thoughts were passing in his mind, sir Hugh fixed an inquiring eye upon this suspicious person, who, unable to stand its gaze, and shrinking within himself, replied, as if the question had been actually put to him, so cowardly is guilt when conscience speaks—"'Tis all true, your honour; you certainly behold Cramptext again in old England; and I hope your honour will pardon me this time for the evil I might have meditated against you or yours, in consequence of my

my keeping my word with you. You may remember, sir Hugh Singleton, that when I parted from you in a court of justice, I promised, should I ever return, to give you a better account of your *nephew*, which promise, in consideration of your clemency in the present instance, I mean religiously to perform."

"Profane not the name of religion, thou hypocrite! by calling in its aid to any act of thine," replied sir Hugh; "but although your communication cannot now influence either me or my nephew, still, if it is any thing which tends to exculpate your own conduct towards him, you may speak."

Cramptext then, with a sycophantic bow, which helped to conceal an arch grin that distorted his countenance, thus began—

"About ten years ago, as I was following my religious avocations—nay, frown not, your honour, I can denominate them by no other name—I say, as I was following my religious avocations, at a village

lage not far from this spot, I was several times accosted by a person here present, who begged, not my money, but my prayers in his behalf. Believing him to be some miserable wretch, loaded with crimes, I was willing, perhaps on a double account, to unburthen him of some of them, and therefore at last yielded him my attention. But what was my surprise, on a farther acquaintance, at discovering, under this garb of misery, one whom I had known in other days, as the lively, gay, and insinuating Clarence Butteral!

"Expressing my surprise at so visible an alteration, both in person and manners, he gave me to understand, that having resided some years abroad, he had been obliged to take an active part in many scenes that had taken place during the French revolution; and in consequence of his being frequently pressed into the service of one faction, he as constantly obtained the enmity of another; in consequence

quence of which he had received from one of its members the wounds which had thus mutilated his person; 'and for which,' he exclaimed, with a vehement tone, 'I have sworn ample *revenge!*"

Here a groan of anguish escaped the labouring bosom of Evans, as he appeared to swallow every syllable that was uttered by the speaker; whilst the head of the guilty Ambrose was hung in sullen silence, as Cramptext hasted to proceed.

"Finding him thus determined, I inquired, if he was so eager to obtain revenge, why he did not accomplish it before he returned to England, seeing it was not so easy a matter for him to accomplish here?—'Because,' he replied, 'the fiend who has thus injured me is an *Englishman*, and it is only here that I can now wreak my vengeance!"

Here another groan burst from the heart of Evans, as the thought of his Olivia presented itself, who, by this speech, he concluded was no more.

"He

"He then went on to assure me," said Cramptext, "that, in spite of his forlorn and destitute appearance, he was sufficiently rich to reward any one who would assist him, in a design which he had formed, and was determined to execute. This was no other than the stealing and conveying away the apparent *nephew* and *heir* to sir Hugh Singleton of Myfod Vale; but who, he affirmed, was in fact no relation of his, having been exchanged, in his infancy, for the real nephew of sir Hugh, by his former steward, which infant had died in the retirement to which it had been consigned, and the boy called *Frederick Singleton* was the nephew and sole heir of the person who had so deeply injured him, and upon whom he had sworn to execute a deep, solemn, and lasting *revenge*.

"I hope now your honour is satisfied that I have told the truth, and made you a discovery into the bargain," continued Cramptext, in an ironical tone, "which

will evince for my sincerity, and obtain me credit for keeping my word in future."

"Indeed I am not satisfied," replied sir Hugh, "nor do I give credit to one atom of what you have been relating," whilst Frederick, agitated by the strange story just related, flew to his uncle, and grasping his hand, whilst an expression of the tenderest affection beamed over his countenance, besought him not to give credence to so strange an invention.

Returning the affectionate pressure in the same emphatic way, the baronet, again turning towards Cramptext, said—"Well, sir, as we are already acquainted with your proceedings in that event, we will wave all farther comments upon the subject; but be so good as to inform us on what pretence you were loitering here, lest I prosecute you for thus daring to trespass on my grounds."

"Certainly, sir, I can have no interest now," glancing towards the fallen Butteral, "in denying my errand, or to confessing

fessing that it was once more to assist in serving *an old friend*, whilst he assured me I ran no risk, and should be well rewarded for my pains; and more particularly so, as cash ran low after so expensive a trip as your honour was kind enough to send me."

"And pray in what way were your mighty services again requested?"

"Why there is no accounting for the versatility of taste and genius, your honour," replied the *ci-devant* preacher: "my friend there, who had before employed me in trepanning a young gentleman, and knowing how well I succeeded in that point, though I did not absolutely take him away, now besought my service, in respect to a young lady, the possession of whom, he gave me to understand, was necessary to his very existence."

"Wretch!" muttered Frederick.

"Not wishing him to die," continued the narrator, "and particularly so before I had received the promised reward, I did

as he desired me, and was already stationed with a chaise, which I had procured, at the park-gate, ready to receive the prize; but he being more tardy in his operations than my patience would allow, in stepping forward a yard or two, to ascertain his movements, I became entangled myself in a way that I had neither foreseen nor desired; and this, gentlemen, is the whole truth of the matter."

"And what have *you* to say to this?" impatiently darting forward, and addressing the cripple, cried Mr. Evans.

"Say," retorted he, sullenly, "that I am once more cursed with the sight of *Theodore Evans!* and that, in beholding him, I recognize my deadliest foe. Trouble me no more! *your* questions are useless!"

The name of Theodore Evans, thus emphatically pronounced by Butteral, sounded like a knell in the ears of sir Hugh Singleton—a knell, that whilst it blanched his cheek, and palsied his hand, rung out the

the death-stroke to all his fair possessions in Myfod Vale; and what perhaps was of still greater moment at this period, his nephew's after him.

Although this gentleman could not be ignorant of the tenure by which he held possession of this beautiful estate, having been fully made acquainted with it during the last moments of his father, yet, as the first stipulated period had passed, without either the appearance of its former possessor, or any claim being made on his part, and so many years had elapsed since, that it was now brought within the verge of the time specified in the second; thus, believing himself perfectly secure in the possession, he had settled his mind upon the business, and would now as soon have expected a visit from the man in the moon, or an inhabitant of the antipodes, as again to behold *Theodore Evans;* and in this person, the *stranger* too, what could have been his motive for such concealment? why not openly demand restitution of his

property? were questions that agitated the bewildered mind of sir Hugh, who, now feeling himself really indisposed, made a sign to Frederick that he wished to quit the room; when hastily apologizing for his absence, and leaning on the arm of his nephew, he repaired to his study, there to meditate at leisure upon the extraordinary discovery he had made, and revolve in his own mind the best mode of proceeding in consequence.

Here the worthy baronet had not long remained, a prey to his solitary reflections, ere the door opened, and Love, who, believing him still occupied with the delinquents in the hall, entered, in order to exchange a book; but on seeing sir Hugh, she apologized for her intrusion, and withdrew.

In silence she was regarded, and in silence suffered to depart; but not without leaving a new source of concern to the already-harassed feelings of the meditator. To the growing attachment which had

long

long subsisted between this lovely girl and his Frederick he could be no stranger; and as he was convinced that she was in possession of every requisite, fortune excepted, to render the marriage state happy, *that* he disregarded, both in regard to her own personal qualifications, as well as the promise of protection given by him to her ancient friend; believing that if the estate should fall to Frederick after his decease, he could make up an equivalent from his own private purse for the want of fortune in his wife. But now he shuddered to reflect on the pain which it would be necessary to inflict on two young hearts, whose possessors were looking forward to a life of happiness in the society of each other. The *title*, which must descend to Frederick after his decease, he argued, must be properly supported, and this could not be done by marrying a pennyless wife; no, that would be to plunge him and his posterity into endless difficul-

ties; and to avoid such a catastrophe, prompt measures should be taken.

"Yes, my children," he exclaimed, in the fullness of his heart, "imperious necessity demands that you should be divided, and the sooner the sacrifice takes place the better."

Brushing the tear of commiseration from his eye, which had gathered during this retrospection, the baronet hastened to lady Ap-Howel, in order to communicate the intelligence which he had so lately gathered, with its probable consequences in regard to Frederick, as well as to confer with her upon the speediest and most plausible means of her instant removal, with her *protégée*, from the Vale.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XV.

ALTHOUGH exceedingly surprised at such unlooked-for intelligence, and feeling an equal degree of pity with sir Hugh for the pain necessary to be inflicted on the feelings of the young people, still she perfectly agreed with him in the expediency of the measure he had suggested, in order to save her beloved nephew from the ruin in which such an alliance might involve him. She knew, besides, that she should be acting in consonance to the ideas which his father would entertain on the subject, who, however they might appear to tolerate her lovely *protégée*, knew too well how to appreciate the goods of this world, yclept riches, to wish a son of theirs to sacrifice at the shrine of Cupid, if depriv-

ed of the gifts of Plutus. Determined therefore to hasten her departure as much as possible, she had only to frame an excuse equal to the emergency of the case, which should enable her to set out for Castle Howel before the dreaded explanation should ensue. This she was enabled to do by contriving to make it appear that she had received a letter from sir Howel, commanding her immediate return; when, in a couple of days, it was fixed that she and her young friends should turn their backs on the inhabitants of Myfod Vale.

Alas, confiding youth! who thought thyself within the very pale of happiness, what a disappointment awaits thee! and how will it wound the gentle heart of her whose existence seems interwoven with thine, when she learns the cruel intelligence of thy separation! But a cordial drop still lurked in the cup of bitterness they were destined to swallow; they knew

knew not the extent of their threatened misery, and to *meet again* was the only idea that now sustained them.

Lady Ap-Howel had already given orders to prepare for the meditated journey, and desired, at the same time, that the young ladies might be informed of it; but Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths being no where to be found, application was made to Taffline to unite in the search after her lady, her presence being immediately necessary.

"It is very little service for me to go after Miss," replied Taffline, "because I know she is gone scampering over the park upon her new *horsipede*, and she makes him go like wild, so that I could never overtake her. Well, every one as they like; though, for my part, I should hate to mount a thing that had no more flesh nor ploot in it than a wooden gate-post, and then fancy 'tis to carry a poty like a life animal. No, no, none of your wooden horses for me. Give me my own

little Taff, that used to crawl up the mountains with me like a cat, and then gallop away as fleet as a greyhound—that's the thing for Taffline!"

Scarcely had Taffline finished her speech ere Miss Jeannette was seen guiding her velocipede towards the house, not a little surprised on observing an unusual bustle throughout the whole, which surprise was not decreased, when Taffline, flying towards her, exclaimed—"Come, Miss Jeannette! put up your horsipede, though Heaven knows he wants but little staple-room, and what is still petter, but little fotter; we must have other guess horses than he to carry us, 'tis my thinking, or we shall never reach Castle Ap-Howel."

"*Castle Ap-Towel!*" repeated Miss Griffiths, quitting her Pegasus; "what is the girl talking of? whoever dreamt just now of Castle Ap-Howel?"

"Why your aunt, Miss, I pelieve has peen treaming of some such thing, thof she is wide awake; for it is certain that we

we are all going, pag and paggage, and that tirectly too, or my name is not Taffline."

Not a little mortified at this intelligence, Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, who had suffered her volatile imagination to stray rather too frequently towards the grave Meillard to think of quitting Myfod Vale with composure, now rushed into the withdrawing-room to ascertain the truth of Taffline's assertion. Here she found sir Hugh in close conversation with lady Ap-Howel upon the recent event; when having hastily put her question, she was as concisely answered, that an immediate preparation would be necessary to enable them to commence their journey homeward, which would take place without delay. Struck dumb by this positive decision, poor Miss Jeannette, with a greater weight on her heart than she had ever experienced, went in search of *Love*, from whom she expected that degree of consolation generally derived from sympathy.

From

From the time sir Hugh Singleton had quitted the hall, the business, in regard to the examination of Cramptext and Butteral, stood still; the one appearing to have confessed all he had to say, and the other continuing inflexibly silent in regard to every question that was put to him; till the patience of Mr. Evans being exhausted, he stepped forward, and addressing himself to Frederick and Meillard, as they stood together, said aloud—"I arrest this man, as having, some years ago in Italy, amongst many other crimes, committed that of *murder!* and I charge you, gentlemen, with seeing him taken into custody, and secured accordingly."

"The vile insinuation is false, Theodore Evans," groaned the treacherous Clarence; "*I* did not *murder* her, ruffian as I was; *she* escaped my violence, which added fuel to the envious fire that burned within my bosom, and instigated my attempt on the lovely Julia, thy *beauteous sister*, when thy cursed arm was stretched forth

to

to render me what I am. Then I swore revenge—bitter revenge, on thee and thine; and I would have executed it, had not an unseen power intervened to prevent the completion of my design. Now it is too late, and with the disappointment my energies give way, and I believe myself not long for this world; my intentions are now become known, and therefore easy to frustrate; yet think not, should I make a confession of my real as well as my meditated crimes, that I do it to satisfy thee. No! my enmity to thee, as the person who blasted my every expectation in this world, by rendering me an object loathsome to behold, must ever remain unshaken!"

Here, apparently exhausted, the cripple again sunk into the recumbent posture from which he had, in some measure, elevated himself at the beginning of his speech; when Evans, fearing he had fainted, in his eagerness to have him proceed, implored him to swallow some restorative.

"Not

"Not from thy hands," he replied, "not from thy hands; Clarence Butteral and Theodore Evans can never break bread together again." Then turning towards Frederick, he addressed him by saying—"Young man, though Ambrose, in concert with others, once did you an injury, and meditated towards you, had not Heaven interfered, a much greater, will you refuse to bestow upon him the refreshment he now requires at your hands to prevent him from sinking?"

"Certainly not," was the ready reply of Frederick, who possessed a heart open as day to melting charity, and who flew to order in refreshments immediately; when having partaken of the good cheer set before him, the cripple entreated to be allowed a short time for repose, in order to recruit his weakened frame, which had been much shook by his morning rencontre with Mr. Evans, as well as the violent passions by which he had been agitated. After which, touched by conscience, which, however

however late, seldom omits to awaken the sinner's heart, he promised a recital that should fully elicit the progress of his conduct.

Finding himself sufficiently refreshed after a few hours' sleep, Clarence Butteral, with a hollow voice and ungracious mien, prepared to give the promised recital, to which Mr. Evans, who had never lost sight of him during his repose, as eagerly prepared to listen; and having again summoned sir Hugh, they, with Frederick, placed themselves around the speaker, each in their turn interested in the communication he was about to make, though from different motives; and each alike impatiently awaited the result.

"That I owe some atonement to an innocent being, whom I had intended deeply to injure, by way of satiating a justly-conceived revenge upon another, is perhaps the strongest reason I can give for the explanation I am about to lay before you," said the somewhat-pepitent Butteral; "and

may

may Heaven, in consideration of this, look with a favourable eye upon the actual enormities I have committed! But to proceed. Ambition," he continued, "the sin by which e'en angels fell, has been my ruin. It was implanted in my constitution from my very birth; and to its evil growth I attribute every ill that has since befallen me. Through life I have blindly followed its dictates, and at one period of my existence, had reached within sight of its highest pinnacle, from which, alas! I was as suddenly hurled, never to rise again!

"To describe the season of my youth is irrelevant to my tale; I will therefore commence my narrative from the time in which I ingratiated myself sufficiently into the favour of that being who stands before me, to induce him to accept me as his companion on his return to Rome, where, after a visit made to England, he went to find a home. This was an era in my life at which I had scarcely hoped to arrive,

arrive, so much beyond even my daring expectations, and that country, a theatre on which I was destined to play many different parts; but as that is a subject not at all connected with the events I am about to relate, only as it enabled me to achieve them with greater facility, I shall pass it over. From my first arrival then in Italy, I shall date the commencement of my dislike, which in time amounted to hate, of Theodore Evans: this to some may appear strange, when I confess my obligations to him, and towards whom I ought to have engendered nought but sentiments of gratitude; but they know not the effects produced by an envious disposition. I saw this envied being moving in a superior sphere, and felt myself humiliated by receiving his favours; I also beheld him regarded for his handsome person, whilst mine was calculated rather to create aversion than esteem, and I envied him; I saw him beloved by a woman, the fairest in creation, whom I adored, and I *hated* him! but

when

when his arm, though justly raised against me, succeeded in making me what I am, a mutilated object scarcely human, I loathed his very name; it was odious in my ears, and I bitterly swore to wreak on him a deep and dire *revenge*.

"To achieve this point seemed now the only object for which I lived; and having employed spies to watch his every movement, and acquaint me with all his proceedings, I learned that the infant child of his sister had been conveyed to England, and consigned, through the medium of his steward, to the care of sir Hugh Singleton. On this precious child I had determined to wreak my vengeance; it was his *heir*, and through its means, perhaps, would his name be transmitted to posterity, whilst mine would crumble with the dust; this, therefore, would be the surest means of striking at his heart. But the time for putting my design in execution was not arrived; other scenes demanded my presence, and I knew the child

child was safe, whilst Evans himself was too securely lodged to escape me. Thus I permitted matters to remain in *statu quo*, till affairs, by drawing to a crisis in Italy, gave notice for my departure from thence, in order to facilitate my schemes in England; this I gladly undertook, for my soul began to thirst for more active vengeance on the devoted Theodore; and a prosperous voyage, combining with fortunate incidents, soon enabled me to succeed according to my wishes.

"The account already given by my coadjutor Cramptext, respecting the seizing and conveying away of that young gentleman," pointing to Frederick, "is correct. In him I believed, according to the report I received from my emissaries, to have obtained full possession of Julia's orphan child, which I meant to have sacrificed to the manes of my resentment, had not my illness, and his subsequent escape, prevented me. This, no doubt, was an interposition of Heaven, in order to save the innocent

nocent from the hands of the guilty; and for which I now offer up my thanks, as I have since discovered *he* was not the individual I sought, but the undoubted nephew of sir Hugh Singleton."

"Certainly not!" exclaimed the agitated Evans, whilst the hand of Frederick was again closely knit with that of his uncle; "certainly not! but oh, Clarence Butteral! if you have still any regard for truth, any wish to make atonement for the evils you have committed, tell me where I shall find her, where seek the *daughter* of my sainted Julia?"

"I have no desire to make any atonement to you," languidly replied the almost-exhausted Butteral; "and if I could have succeeded in my attempt this morning, you would never have known she was in existence. But now a higher power than thine calls upon me to confess, even against my will, that in the lovely object of my rude attack you may behold her; that nameless girl, the *protégée* of lady Ap-Howel,

Howel, is the *heir* to Theodore Evans, and the orphan child of the persecuted *Julia Valvino!*"

Here the cripple, apparently exhausted by his exertions, and the different emotions which shook his wasted frame, sunk back nearly fainting, whilst the most lively surprise filled the bosoms of his auditors; when having entreated that he might be put to bed, and every proper attention administered, the forgiving and transported Theodore flew to embrace his long-lost niece, whilst the others retired to ruminate on the sentiments by which they felt themselves most affected.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT a coincidence of events had occurred within the last few hours, and how serious were they likely to prove in their consequences, were the reflections that now occupied the mind of Sir Hugh Singleton. That Theodore Evans would immediately lay claim to the estate, was certain, in his opinion, it being just within the time allowed in the clause for the appearance of an heir for that purpose, and that Frederick must lose all hope as to its future possession, was also equally certain. For himself he cared not, otherwise than as the resigning a place long endeared to him by possession, and embellished by his own hands; but on his nephew's account he grieved—grieved to dim the lustre of his opening prospects—to be obliged to put an

an extinguisher on the flame of his love, and to damp all the rising energies of his youth, by having an indefinite period to look forward to for the patrimony which he might bequeath him.

From these unpleasant ruminations the baronet was at length relieved by the entrance of lady Ap-Howel, who came to consult him upon the discovery that had taken place, and which of course would, for the present, set aside the meditated journey, and perhaps in the event entirely frustrate all their future plans, as Love, having now a natural protector, could no longer be amenable to her guidance; and whilst she could not help regretting the loss of one who, by her amiable and affectionate conduct, had endeared herself to her heart, she still felt a soothing satisfaction at the opening prospects of one so estimable.

Whilst these two sincere friends of the young people were still debating on the chances which might militate against their

future happiness; Mr. Evans, who had never lost sight of Butteral (except during his repose), and who wished sir Hugh Singleton, for weighty reasons, to have every proof of the identity of the young lady in question, now sent to request that he, with Frederick and lady Ap-Howel, would again favour him with their presence, to hear the whole of what the guilty wretch now called his confessions—a summons which the party were not slow in obeying.

On again approaching the delinquent, who appeared somewhat revived by rest and refreshment, he proceeded to say, that after having been disappointed of the prey which he believed to have so firmly secured in the person of Frederick, he had remained a long time in a very debilitated state, but from which he had recovered sufficiently to visit some of his old haunts, whence he discovered the fate of his two *ci-devant* companions, the old man and Cramptext, and likewise of the restoration

of

of Frederick to the arms of his uncle. Not wishing to hazard his own safety by appearing so soon after such an event, and having some affairs of importance which called him to Italy, whither he had determined to have taken the boy for whom he had gone such lengths, but whom it was now impossible to think of regaining, he immediately quitted England for Rome and its vicinity.

"And *Olivia?*" burst in tremulous accents from the lips of the expecting Theodore, as he eagerly dwelt upon every syllable as it proceeded from the mouth of his enemy.

"*Dead,*" replied the somewhat-relenting Butteral—"*dead* to you and to me! although I was not her executioner." Here he passed his hand over his brow to dissipate the gathering perspiration, which horror, at some inward remembrance, appeared to have produced. "No!" he continued, "she was fated to escape my fiend-like machinations, by finding a secure asy-

lum in the Convent della Pieta, where she now resides; and where may her sanctity make atonement for the sins of the wretched Clarence! But to proceed. Although obliged by imperious necessity thus to postpone my plan of meditated vengeance against the hated Theodore Evans, I had not lost sight of it; and upon returning again to my native land, and believing myself secure of my prey in the supposed nephew of sir Hugh Singleton, I again bent my steps towards Myfod Vale, in the vicinity of which I could arrange my plans with security; here I had not long remained, when chance gave to my astonished view the figure of my former companion in iniquity, the banished Cramptext. After the surprise occasioned by this unexpected meeting had subsided, we proceeded to compare notes, as to our past, present, and future prospects in life, when I confessed to him the still-lurking purpose of my soul, to the completion of which I again besought his assistance.

sistance. But who can guess the astonishment I experienced, when he proceeded to inform me that I laboured under a mistake in regard to the *supposed* nephew of sir Hugh Singleton, who was in fact not the person I wanted; but that for a certain sum, which he specified, he would be bound to discover the real object of my pursuit. To this compact I was not long in subscribing," continued he; " when Cramptext continued to inform me, that during his itinerant mode of life as a preacher, which he confessed to have been the most lucrative, as well as convenient, by procuring him an easy access into numberless families, he was one day invited to attend the sickbed of an old man, living in a very retired hamlet in North Wales, where, there being no resident clergyman, he had thought himself fortunate in having arrested him, having a secret of importance to communicate, which he was loth should go out of the world with him.—'The sick man,' added Cramp-

text, 'proceeded to say, that in his younger days he had been steward to a gentleman of the name of Evans, who, by some unforeseen occurrences, had been induced to spend the latter part of his life abroad, where he had died, after bequeathing the family estate to his son. "That son," added he, "I loved and venerated, as well as pitied; for by some adverse fate his possessions were alienated, and fell into the hands of strangers, whom Heaven forgive me if I doubted wrongfully, but I could not help suspecting them of having dealt unfairly by my young master Theodore; and when I received from him a beautiful infant, the child of his sister, confided to my care, with injunctions that I should, by presenting it to sir Hugh Singleton, the present possessor of Myfod Vale, insure it a double guardianship, vested in him and myself, I hesitated to obey him, believing in my heart, that if he had cajoled my master out of the estate, he would not stop at a trifle to keep it in his possession; and,

and, therefore, though the very dwelling of its ancestors, I did not conceive it a fit place for a descendant of the house of Evans; and Heaven pardon me, as I said before, if I acted or thought unjustly! The strictest injunctions, as I have given you to understand, were laid upon me in regard to the rearing this little girl——"

'*Girl!*' I repeated, interrupting Cramptext in his relation, 'was it then a female infant for which I ought to have sought?'

'Most certainly it was,' he replied; but to continue in the words of the speaker.—"This little girl, whom I could not resolve to commit to the protection of those I deemed its most inveterate enemies, I at length confided to the care of a person on whom I could depend, in a distant part of the country, describing it as an orphan, whom I wished to be brought up in concealment, without assigning even her name, whence she came, or my own. This the person to whom I had consigned her engaged to perform, in consideration

of a small yearly stipend, which I regularly paid; when after a short time, he informed me, that he had placed the child, as a farther security, with an antiquated dame, who, having quarrelled with the world, lived secluded in a rocky dell, where she had, for years together, seen no one but himself, and where it was next to impossible she could ever be discovered. This pleased me exceedingly; here I could be sure of her safety; and whilst she grew up like a lily of the vale, inhaling its own sweetness, I longed to introduce her, lovely as she must have been, to her relative; but, alas! I have never heard from him since, and know not, at this moment, whether God has summoned him to his long account, or whether he is still in the land of the living. But to conclude my tale. A few weeks back I went, as usual, to inquire of old Perryn respecting the health of his charge, and to pay him his annual stipend, when he informed me that the old dame was dead, and that my lily had been

been transplanted by the hand of sir Hugh Singleton (the very man from whom I had been so eager to guard her) to the more congenial soil of Castle Ap-Howel, where she had become domesticated, and where it was most likely she would continue to remain. Satisfied as to her security, I returned home, determining not to divulge the secret till some pressing occasion for her welfare, or the approach of death, should oblige me. The last-mentioned period is now come; I feel the hand of the grim tyrant upon me, and I have only time to assert, that the orphan girl, taken from the old woman's cottage in the ravine, and conveyed to Castle Ap-Howel, is niece, and perhaps heir to Theodore Evans, formerly possessor of Myfod Vale."

'This,' continued Cramptext, 'is all I have to communicate, and which I should have confided to you in requital for past services, had we met before my trip across the ocean; but the fates denied us a

meeting; and to any other ear I deemed the communication *unnecessary*. Thus the secret has slept with me till the present period, when your reappearance has called it forth, and you are now at liberty to profit by it accordingly.'

"'Equally surprised and enraptured at this unlooked-for intelligence," continued Butteral, "I could have hugged the narrator to my bosom, whilst I inwardly exclaimed—'Haughty and imperious Olivia! you scorned my love, and the more tender Julia equally disdained me for another! but this blooming girl shall now reward me for the slights, the pains, the mortifications I endured for you; and in her possession I shall find ample gratification for the *revenge* I have constantly harboured in my breast.' Then turning to Cramptext, 'I told him, that in order to seal the compact between us, it would be necessary for him to ascertain if she, of whom he had spoken, was still living, and to be found in the same situation. This he

he immediately agreed to, when, after a rapid journey into Flintshire, he as quickly returned with the gratifying intelligence of her being then in a much more convenient spot for our purpose, namely, at Mytod Vale.

"How we arranged our plans to entrap this innocent being, and how they were, most happily for her, frustrated, you already know; and if any doubt still exists in your minds respecting the truth of what I have advanced, Cramptext, I have no hesitation in saying, will corroborate the veracity of my story."

"That will I," cried Cramptext, again stepping forward, "and can safely vouch for every word that he has uttered being as true as the gospel, and I will take my affidavit of it at any time; and what is still more to the purpose, I could have told you all about the young lady before you sent me that disagreeable voyage, had I known that you, sir Hugh, were so much interested in it. However, I hope

the intelligence does not now come too late, and that you and the other gentleman will have the charity to pardon the intended offence, for the sake of the wished-for discovery."

"That," replied sir Hugh, "rests with Mr. Evans; if he can excuse so flagrant a scheme of villany against the welfare of his niece, it does not remain with me to inflict the so-richly-deserved punishment."

"From the satisfaction arising in my heart, in consequence of the treasure I have found, of whose identity I have not the smallest doubt, I freely pronounce a pardon upon all who have so deeply injured me; and as to you," he continued, turning towards Cramptext, "whose recent error appears to have been committed through poverty, and that you may no longer take the sacred cloak of religion as a covering for your sins, I will not only grant an amnesty for what is past, but will, if you are inclined to prefer a life of honest mediocrity, with true devotion for your

your guide, to one of guilt, and the semblance of it only, furnish you with the necessary means for that purpose."

"May God bless you, sir!" ejaculated Cramptext, with clasped hands, and a tear of contrition starting to his eye; "and may *He* also prosper me, as I shall accede to your generous proposal! During the last few years of my misspent life, I have suffered much, and have been frequently led to confess, in brokenness of spirit, that the judgments of the Almighty were justly inflicted upon me; for who can hypocritically cover himself with the shield of Truth, when her precepts, lovely and unadorned, shun all disguise, without deserving the severest punishment? and stout must the heart of that man be, who, having clothed himself in the *garb* of religion only, does not falter in his latter days, when the necessity of adopting her in reality bursts upon his view; then perhaps, like me, he may wish in vain to turn aside from the falsely-beaten track; and

and then, oh that, like me, he may find a compassionating guide to direct him the only secure path that leads to heaven!"

CHAPTER XVII.

No sooner had the worthy baronet, with the other gentlemen, retired from his hall of audience, than Theodore Evans, whom he had hitherto known only as the *stranger* who had so strongly interested his feelings, now approached him, and extending his hand, demanded his congratulations on the happy termination of events.

"That I did not make myself known to you, my valued friend," continued he, "proceeded from the little desire I felt, at my time of life, and circumstanced as I believed myself to be, for the accumulation of those riches which I never regarded,

ed, even in my most prosperous days, as the *summum bonum* of earthly happiness; for how frequently do we witness their insufficiency to procure us the felicity which we sigh for! and how often does their possession prove the source of every concomitant evil! Besides, I considered you as being in the possession of something worth living for—an endearing relative to sweeten life—a being who would render the worldly goods of which I might have deprived you doubly valuable. Should I then, to whom they were but as dust in the balance, wish to deprive you of that which was useless to me? This estate, which passed from my hands to those of your father, you could bestow upon a beloved youth who richly deserves your affection—one whose character and conduct are both well known to me, who have, though unsuspected by you both, delighted in watching the buds of promise which have unfolded in his maturer years. Yes, Frederick Singleton has been no

stranger

stranger to me for some time; and when I found, upon inquiry, that the child of my sainted Julia had never been conveyed to your arms, and that all traces of her existence seemed lost for ever, I formed the resolution, that he should eventually become the heir of *Theodore Evans*, which I determined to effect by never making it known that such an unfortunate being continued to vegetate upon earth.

"Now, my young friend," continued the animated speaker, turning towards Frederick, and grasping his hand as he spoke, "recent circumstances compel me to revoke the edict which I had in my own mind issued in your favour. I have discovered a relation, a near and dear one—one who stands nearest to me in the scale of affection, as well as natural affinity, and one who is destined to annul the design I had in your favour. But," added he, still warmly pressing Frederick's hand, which he retained with a firm grasp, "is there

no

no immediate compromise to be made in this affair? cannot you, my young friend, point out a method by which Frederick Singleton may still enjoy the possession of Myfod Vale, without injuring the future lawful possessor? If not," continued he, smiling, "we must proceed to consult my beloved niece; her brain perhaps may be more fertile, and she may luckily furnish us with an expedient."

"Ah, my dear sir," stammered the now-confused youth, whose palpitating heart had led him but too quickly to penetrate the design of his benevolent friend, "how can I ever sufficiently acknowledge the honour you have done me by your friendship, or thank you for your liberal designs in my favour—designs which, but to relinquish in favour of an object so beloved and cherished, affords me the greatest degree of happiness; and if to have the temerity to aspire to the favour——"

"Fiddledee-dee of *aspiring!*" exclaimed the enraptured Evans, more animatedly

edly than for many years; "talk not of aspiring, my dear boy, to that which your acquiescence in will give me the greatest pleasure. 'Tis an event upon which I have set my heart, and when it takes place, (you see I have no clause for a refusal), will prove the solace of my future life, and a sweetener of the bitter dregs which the cup of affliction has left me. What say you, my friend, to this plan of mine?" addressing sir Hugh. "Have I your sanction? or have I been arrogantly and eagerly disposing of your nephew without your approbation?"

The delighted baronet, satisfied as to the security of his nephew's peace, in regard to the idol of his choice, now assured Mr. Evans of the intention he had always entertained of uniting these two young people, whose affection for each other had long been evident to him, even when the young lady in question was poor, and destitute of all claims in society.—"And if such was my intention then," he added,

"how

"how much more gladly would I do it now, when their union will be sanctioned by such authority?"

"Thank you, my good friend—thank you," replied the transported Evans; "henceforth I trust there will be but one bond of unity between us, and that, in the happiness of those around me, I shall experience a remuneration for the anxieties of my early life. But come, my friends, we are monopolizing this same article of happiness. Besides, I am in danger of again becoming serious; let us therefore seek those who have a right to be sharers with ourselves in this, to me, newly-discovered treasure, and enjoy it doubly by participation."

Sir Hugh, taking the hint, immediately led the way to the withdrawing-room, where they found lady Ap-Howel, with Miss Jeannette seated on one side of her, and the *ci-devant Love*, now acknowledged by her uncle as Julia di Valvino, on the other; whilst Mr. and Mrs. Singleton,

ton, with a part of their family, who were just arrived, in consequence of the rumours which had reached them respecting the late events, formed a group around them.

In a moment the lovely Julia, like an April morn, smiling through tears of joy, flew to her uncle's arms, when having embraced her, he proceeded most emphatically to acknowledge her before all present as the long-lost child of his beloved sister, whom he meant, in future, to adopt as his own, and to replace, as far as in him lay, those parents whom she had so unfortunately lost.—" But," continued he, gaily, " what will my dearest Julia say to me if, believing myself unequal to the guardianship of so delicate a flower, I should delegate the task to another, under whose care I hope to see it blooming in perfection."

Thus saying, he led her, blushing like the rose to which he alluded, towards Frederick, and placing her hand in his, uttered,

uttered, in a faltering, though impressive tone, as if overcome by his emotions— "May Heaven shower its choicest blessings on you both!" when, unable to proceed, he hurried out of the room.

Julia, though taken by surprise, felt too sincerely the effect of her own happiness to wish to conceal it by any mistimed affectation; smiling therefore upon Frederick, whilst she suffered him to retain her hand, the tear of sensibility confessed the satisfaction with which she acceded to the commands laid upon her; whilst the ardent youth, his present felicity doubled by the fear he had so lately entertained of losing what was most dear to him, received the precious gift with rapture, and pressing her to his bosom, murmured at the same time his thanks and his congratulations.

All present now crowded round the youthful pair, to offer their compliments on the termination of the recent events; and no one seemed to rejoice more at the turn

turn which affairs seemed to be taking than Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths, who, instead of being now journeying back into Flintshire, was likely to continue some time longer at Myfod Vale; and what was more, perhaps to assist at a wedding before she returned.—"Well," she repeated, in her own mind, whilst she retained a portion of her former superstition, which she would aver was the pepper of life, "one wedding, it is said, always produces another; and who knows what my fate may be, in the event of this coming to pass?"

Miss Jeannette, for once in her life, was right in her prognostications. Meillard, rejoicing in the happiness awaiting his friend, could not help feeling an inclination to tread in the same steps, flattering himself it would lead to the same end; and having discovered amongst the levities which sometimes characterized the conduct of this young lady many amiable traits of good disposition, and perhaps being

being something encouraged by the flattering glances which were now and then cast towards him, resolved to make an effort towards ingratiating himself in her favour.

This proved no very difficult task; the lady did not hold out a ten-years siege; and the day that saw Frederick Singleton united to the dear little mountain wanderer, whose image had never left his heart, saw Miss Jeannette Ap-Griffiths the bride of a worthy man, who valued her for her good qualities, while he did not despair of eradicating the bad ones.

Butteral, the guilty and vindictive Clarence Butteral, still remained an inmate at the Vale, occupying the apartment to which he had been conveyed when nearly exhausted by the confession of his crimes; here, in solitude and suffering, he had time to take a review of his past life, and to endeavour to make atonement, by repentance, for the injuries he had done others,

others, as well as to practise forgiveness for the injuries which he might have received. In this he was particularly aided by the injured Evans himself, who, when witnessing the contrition of a subdued spirit, did all in his power to conquer the repugnance which the invalid at first felt to seeing him; and succeeding in time, he, by his advice and consolation, eased his mental sufferings in this world, and smoothed his passage for that to come.

During some of the hours which Mr. Evans spent with the invalid, he prevailed upon him to give him a more circumstantial account respecting the fate of those friends dear to him in Italy, when the culprit confessed that the duke di Valvino and his son had both perished, he believed, in the skirmishing that succeeded the marching in of the troops sent to the relief of the city by the king of Naples, whither he confessed they had been decoyed by his emissaries. He also confessed that Olivia had escaped his machinations,

tions, by flying from him in disguise, and taking refuge in a convent, where, after a short residence, in order to free herself from his odious advances, she had taken the veil, and where," he added, "she had undergone severe deprivations, as her convent had been many times ransacked and plundered by contending parties."

This particularly touched the bosom of Theodore Evans; and though Olivia di Valvino was lost to him for ever, he could not cease to remember that she once was dear to him. To render her declining life as comfortable as possible, therefore, was now his first concern; and to do this effectually he sent over a confidential agent, to ascertain if she was still living, and an inhabitant of Della Pieta; and if so, he was desired to vest a certain sum of money in the hands of trustees, for her whole and sole use, thereby rendering this once-beloved of his soul the only service now remaining in his power.

The unfortunate Theodore Evans de-

rived from this, and his patient forbearance, and charitable conduct towards the dying Clarence, whose eyes he at length closed in the true spirit of Christian forgiveness, a balm to his lacerated mind; and whilst he contemplated the peaceful end of his enemy, and the present enjoyment of those dearest to his heart, he gave due thanks to Heaven for having made him the vehicle of so much happiness to others, and thereby firmly establishing his own future consolation.

Sir Hugh Singleton was gratified by the turn which things had taken to his heart's content; and although he would have been satisfied, in order to secure the happiness of his darling nephew, to have permitted his union with the unclaimed orphan of the mountains, yet, when he found that through her means he could engraft an additional slip of nobility on the genealogical tree, it must be owned that his heart rose something higher in his bosom, on account of this pleasing circumstance;

circumstance; whilst Mrs. Singleton was heard to declare that — "Now indeed things went as they should do; and that, *sooner or later, good actions always brought their own reward!*"

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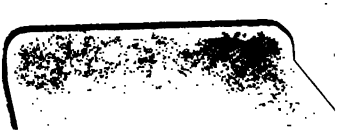
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